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ABSTRACT

This final report is the second of three reports (Preliminary, Final, and Summary) of the findings of the 1988 Provincial Writing Assessment in Manitoba, Canada for grades 4, 8, and 11 of Franco-Manitoban schools. It contains an overview of the purposes, procedures, and a detailed presentation of the findings and recommendations of the Writing Assessment 1988. The report's seven chapters are as follows: (1) Introduction (discussing English language arts curriculum in "francais" schools--where English is a second language for students); (2) Purposes and Procedures of the Test; (3) Grade 4 Results; (4) Grade 8 Results; (5) Grade 11 Results; (6) Teacher Questionnaire; and (7) Findings and Recommendations. The report is one of a series of reports on English writing assessment in regular English, French Immersion, and Franco-Manitoban (where English is a second language for students) programs. Two bibliographies totaling 22 items are included. An appendix containing the results of teacher surveys at all grade levels is attached. (SR)

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MANITOBA WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

FINAL REPORT

FRANCO-MANITOBAN SCHOOLS

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Manitoba
Education
and Training

MANITOBA

WRITING

ASSESSMENT

1988

FINAL REPORT

Franco-Manitoban Schools

A REPORT OF THE
CURRICULUM SERVICES BRANCH
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Winnipeg, Manitoba
March, 1991

PREFACE

This Final Report is the second of three reports of the findings of the 1988 Writing Assessment for grades 4, 8, and 11 of Franco-Manitoban schools. It contains a description of the study along with conclusions and recommendations based not only upon teacher opinions but also upon the judgement of the Technical Advisory Committee. Members of the Committee reviewed the data and interpreted it in the light of their considerable knowledge and experience. Teachers and school administrators are encouraged to review the recommendations for applicability to their own programs.

There are two other series of reports in this assessment. They are the three Preliminary Reports which present the actual data and the Summary Report which presents an overview of the results along with the main conclusions and recommendations.

The Preliminary Reports were distributed to all schools in the province as well as to school division offices, to teacher and trustee associations, to libraries, and to the universities. The Summary Report will receive the same distribution as the Preliminary Reports, while the more extensive Final Report will only be distributed to school division offices, teacher and trustee organizations, libraries, and universities. Additional copies of this Final Report, however, can be obtained from Manitoba Education and Training on request.

Students in regular English, French Immersion, and Franco-Manitoba programs were tested and reported on separately. There is a complete series of reports (Preliminary, Final, and Summary) available for each of these three populations.

Acknowledgements

This assessment would not have been possible without the assistance and co-operation of people too numerous to mention: the students who wrote the tests; teachers who administered the tests; those who assisted us with the pilot testing; and teachers who took the time to complete questionnaires. Special mention, however, must be made of a number of groups and individuals:

- Lucille Maurice who wrote this report.
- The members of the Joint Committee on Evaluation who provided guidance throughout the project.
- The following members of the Technical Advisory Committee who aided with the analysis and interpretation of results: Lucille Verlay, Anna Labelle, Paul LaRivière, Anita Perron, Catherine Robertson, Norman MacDonald, Carol Johnson, Diane Beresford, and Huguette Phaneuf.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Population

This report summarizes the 1988 English Writing Assessment results of the grades 4, 8, and 11 students in 20 "français" schools in Manitoba. These students are assessed separately from English and Immersion students with no intent of comparisons in the results.

In the case of the grades 4 and 8 students, papers were marked by markers who had been trained on samples drawn from "français" schools and whose expectations reflected the concerns for the constraints inherent in the English Language Arts curriculum in "français" schools at these levels. The grade 11 students had their papers marked by the same group of provincial raters who marked all other grade 11 Immersion and English papers.

A Statement About the English Language Arts Curriculum in "français" Schools

The curriculum of studies as implemented in "français" schools of the province by the Bureau de l'éducation française stipulates that the teaching of English (which is a second language for students in these schools) shall begin in the third grade with a teaching time allotment of 15% of the teaching day; that is to say, Franco-Manitoban beginning readers whose first language is French, should learn to read and write in that language before being introduced to the same skills in English. These recommendations are supported by the findings of numerous studies that have come from cross-cultural reading research done in many countries and which carry the bulk of reading research beyond the confines of local conditions allowing for a broader conceptualization of the impact of beginning to read and write in a second language. The philosophy of the curriculum guide rests on several premises about beginning to read and write in a second language. These premises, which have moved well beyond the realm of conjecture, arose from insight gained in the psycholinguistic processes of learning to read and write through comparative reading investigations carried on in many countries. (Downing, 1976)

These studies postulate

- that a frequent cause of reading problems is the use of a different language of instruction from the child's mother tongue when formal reading is first introduced. (Downing, 1976)

- that an understanding of the purposes of literacy allows for better progress in learning to read and write in the early years. Literacy in this case is being used in its broadest sense to mean the total body of skills needed for an effective communication in any medium. (p.65 Middle Years)

This understanding is best developed through frequent and meaningful communicative activities in listening and speaking, reading/writing experiences carried on in the first language during the first years of schooling. (Clay, 1976)

- that a child's understanding of linguistic concepts involved in literacy acquisition appears to be just as important as his understanding of mathematical concepts in acquiring numeracy. This points to the great importance of cognitive clarity in learning to read and write. Cognitive clarity, which is an understanding that printed text is a form of language, that it has a communicative quality, and that features of spoken language are represented by written signs, is an essential part of learning to read and write and implies that the child's understanding of the task at hand should not be inhibited by a linguistic mismatch. (Downing, 1976)

This belief in the necessity for appropriate sequencing of reading and writing in both languages in "français" schools has generated a whole body of hypotheses relative to the particular circumstances surrounding the introduction of written English to students who by the time they reach third grade have an oral knowledge of English picked up mostly through friendly contacts or via television and an oral and written knowledge of French.

It has also engendered concern for the necessity of having Language Arts curricula (both French and English) designed to foster and abet the goals of the total curriculum of "français" schools which are to produce bilingual students by the end of grade 12.

The main assumptions that have formed the basis for this curriculum are the following:

- that children learning only French in kindergarten, grades one and two will experience a temporary lag when introduced to formal English in grade three. However, it is assumed that given proper educational treatment, the actual performance of the students in relation to the expected performance in reading and writing skills in English for a given level will steadily improve over the years and it is expected that disparity between these two standards will have disappeared by the end of high school.

- that the student's ability for learning to read and write in the second language will be enhanced in view of the fact that he/she will have developed meta-linguistic awareness of his/her first language. Meta-linguistic awareness is the ability to to reflect and talk about language; specifically, language awareness develops when a speaker or listener begins consciously to think about the language being used.

- that assuming we accept the psycholinguistic view of reading as being an interaction between the thoughts and language of the reader and the thoughts and language of the author and of writing as the expression of a meaningful set of ideas then it should be deemed essential to make provisions for increasing the listening vocabulary of the student's second language and for developing his oral competency in that language before beginning formal reading and writing in the second language.

- that thought processes and concepts that have been developed initially through significant experiences and problem-solving activities in the first language will foster and support learning of the same in the second language and, in turn, will be strengthened by their use in the second language.

- that transfers of learning occur when learning a second language. Transfers of learning refer to processes which are basic to learning and that once learned can be applied to any or almost any language. Because of the high degree of correlation in many areas between English and French, it is possible to transfer many of the skills from one language to the other quite readily. Thought processes, (e.g., classification, sequencing, analyzing) concepts of time, position, etc., and meta-linguistic awareness, all of which are non-language specific, fall in that category. In other areas a concept will be a transfer but the application in many cases will not (e.g., punctuation). However, teachers must not assume that transfer of skills or concepts has taken place even though these concepts and skills have been taught in the other language. Whereas students may transfer a skill from one language to another, it does not follow that they will do so automatically. Teachers must provide opportunities which will increase the students' awareness of the phenomena and facilitate and reinforce transfer of learning from one language to another.

- that interferences (or negative transfers) occur when learning a second language. Interference is the tendency to impose phonological, syntactical and semantic systems of one's language on the second language being learned. Because beginning readers and writers of English may make errors due to negative transfer (interference from their first language), a competent teacher must be aware of the interferences in order to eliminate confusion for students or to diagnose specific areas of difficulty. Such errors would be present in spelling patterns, word order in sentences, misuse of prepositions, etc.

- that it is necessary for the teacher to be conscious of the fact that the reading/writing process in English is identical to the reading/writing process in French. **Teaching strategies that are effective in one language are effective in the other.**

- that Language Arts teachers (both French and English) must possess a sound knowledge of how children acquire literacy, of how language and thinking processes evolve. They must also be good diagnosticians in order to gear instruction to the levels and needs of students and to avoid redundant exercises in skills students already possess or do not need.

- that the Language Arts curriculum in its conception must reflect an acknowledgement of the time constraints placed upon the English Language Arts program and of transfers which take place between the two languages and compensate for the time constraints.

All of these assumptions, although benefitting from knowledge gained through different studies and reinforced by conventional wisdom about reading and writing in a second language, have not been tested as they apply to the Language Arts curriculum in "français" schools in Manitoba. This provincial writing assessment provides a welcome opportunity to verify if an English Language Arts curriculum based on these assumptions produces satisfactory levels of performance in writing, for Franco-Manitoban students.

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CHAPTER 2

Purposes and Procedures of the Test

The Final Report of the 1988 Provincial Writing Assessment contains an overview of the purposes and procedures, and a detailed presentation of the findings and recommendations of the Writing Assessment 1988.

Purpose

The 1988 Writing Assessment was designed primarily to supply data on the writing competence of students, to survey a broad range of skills and to produce a descriptive rather than an evaluative picture of school writing in Manitoba. Its intention was to obtain estimates of group performance, not to grade individual students or schools.

Its purpose was threefold:

(i) to describe the state of school writing (with no intent of comparison);

(ii) to monitor curriculum development (see Chapter 1); and

(iii) to provide a basis for recommendations that would assist the process of curriculum improvement locally and provincially.

The data obtained on the writing tests were supplemented by further information gained from the comments of markers and from responses to a teachers' questionnaire about the content and methods of instruction.

Construction and Scoring

Grades 4, 8, and 11 were chosen for assessment because writing in these three grades is indicative of the unfolding of writing development that one might expect in the primary, middle, and senior years. Specific recommendations will be made and directions indicated for each of these levels of schooling according to the findings of this assessment.

In September, 1987 a Technical Advisory Committee was struck to determine the aspects of writing which were to be tested, and to decide upon the scoring process and the analysis of data. The Committee consisted of teachers drawn from different parts of the Province (urban, rural, and Northern) and representative of the three grades to be tested.

The Committee reviewed and selected the forms of writing for the test appropriate to each of the three grade levels. It established, by consensus, the levels of expected performance. It decided upon an holistic evaluation of the written products. For the purpose of describing student performance more precisely, it was thought necessary to specify competence in terms of those aspects of writing common to all prose. These aspects, ideas, structure, style and mechanics, were adapted and arranged as nine qualities essential to school writing. Each quality was defined and the expected performance described on a six-point scale.

Furthermore, the committee decided upon a coherent approach for evaluating the written products of the test. This approach had to be consistent with the integrated and developmental nature of the English Language Arts program.

To achieve consistency with the program, the evaluation procedures used on the test would have to be applicable to all grades. The procedures would have to take into account the various contexts and purposes in which writing is used in schools. Finally, it would have to encourage markers to look beyond the surface features of writing and observe how students cope with meaning and increasing levels of abstraction.

The elements or aspects decided upon for purposes of the writing test were: Organization and Sequence, Wording/Style, Focus or Theme, Ideas, Choice of Detail and Elaboration of Ideas, Sentence Structure, Usage, Punctuation and Capitalization, and Spelling.

A further consideration in constructing the test was the need, within the limits of the test, to mirror procedures recommended in the English Language Arts program for developing writing skills. These procedures provided for such pre- and post-writing activities as peer discussion, rough drafts, editing, revising, and re-writing.

Writing Tasks

The Technical Advisory Committee decided that two written tasks appropriate to age and grade would be chosen for each grade.

Separate spelling tests would be administered to grades 8 and 11.

In grade 4 the two tasks were Story Writing and Report Writing. In the first task students had to construct a story around the finding of a box on the way to school. The second task, Report Writing, required them to write a report on an animal. The report was based on research done previously.

In grade 8 the test consisted of two tasks and a spelling test of 24 words. The first assignment, Persuasive Writing, required students to take and maintain a position for or against one of six statements. The second task, Narrative Writing, required them to write a story set in one of four different time periods.

Grade 11 students were assigned two writing tasks and a spelling test of twenty words. The first task, Process Writing, required students to explain how something was done or organized. The second assignment, Essay Writing, asked students to respond to a newspaper article by writing a personal opinion essay.

Pilot tests were conducted in several schools.

Marking Procedures

The same marking procedures were followed at each grade level.

The written products were marked holistically and evaluated on two types of scales: a General Impression Marking Scale and nine Analytic Scales.

Each student paper was assigned ten different scores.

A General Impression Marking Scale (G.I.M.) provided a single score for each piece of writing, while the Analytic Marking Scales provided nine scores, one for each important aspect of writing identified for evaluation. These aspects or elements are: Organization and Sequence, Word Choice, Focus or Theme, Choice of Detail or Elaboration, Sentence Structure, Usage, Ideas, Punctuation and Capitals, and Spelling.

The General Impression Marking Scale (G.I.M.)

General Impression Marking provides a single impressionistic score awarded by markers who have been carefully trained and practiced to assure reliability.

After the first reading, the markers decide where the paper fits within a range of test papers ordered from the best paper to the poorest according to scales and scores indicated below:

5 or 6 - High
3 or 4 - Middle
1 or 2 - Low
0 - Insufficient Material

The markers focus their attention on the message as a whole. No particular quality or detailed feature such as spelling or syntax, is allowed to constitute the whole score. The markers are concerned with more general or global criteria such as the quality of thought, the overall shaping of the presentation, and the general control of language evident in the writing. They take into account the requirements of the assignment, the maturity of the students, and the expected levels of performance for the grade.

If the scores of the two markers did not differ by more than one point, the two scores were added together to give the final G.I.M. score.

If the scores of the two markers did differ by more than one point, the paper was read for a third time by an adjudicator. In adjudicated cases, the final G.I.M. score was obtained by applying the following rules:

(i) If the adjudicator's rating was midway between the two ratings, then the adjudicator's score was added to the average of the first two scores.

(ii) Otherwise, the adjudicator's score was added to the closer of the two scores.

The two scores of the markers were combined to obtain a final G.I.M. score of 0 to 12.

Analytic Marking Scales

Analytic Marking Scales were used to assess the nine qualities or aspects considered essential to school writing. These qualities are Organization and Sequence, Word Choice, Focus or Theme, Ideas, Choice of Detail and Elaboration, Sentence Structure, Usage, Punctuation and Capitals, and Spelling.

The holistic nature of the marking allowed the markers to maintain a focus on the central meaning of the written product while observing the way the parts related to one another; thus they are able to rate the different aspects of writing. The student's writing is seen as the result of a continuous process of choice among organizational and stylistic options made during the three stages of writing. By comparing first and final drafts, markers are able to observe at which writing stage the fine-tuning to audience and purpose occurred.

The markers were all experienced teachers who were carefully trained in these forms of holistic marking. Their knowledge of the classroom enabled the assessment to present a picture of current practice and a valid normative measure of student writing performance.

The Teacher Questionnaire

The Teacher Questionnaire was undertaken to obtain more information about the processes and strategies used in Manitoba schools to generate writing.

Information of the following aspects and activities was requested:-

(i) the frequency and nature of pre-writing and post-writing activities;
(ii) the sources for generating topics;
(iii) the different purposes for writing;
(iv) the different audiences addressed;
(v) the use of conferencing;
(vi) provisions for sharing of the written products;
(vii) the use of folders; and
(viii) writing across the curriculum.

Results

The results for grades 4, 8 and 11 are reported separately for each grade level.

The method of reporting for each grade will include:

(i) An outline of the writing test for each grade;
(ii) The General Impression Marking Scale and the Analytic Scale scores presented in tabular form;
(iii) A review of some of the main points of writing growth which are reflected in the General Impression Marking scores;
(iv) The criteria that determined the evaluation of the nine essential qualities of writing;
(v) An Interpretation of the results; and
(vi) A summary of the results and of the interpretation of these results for each grade.

For all three levels, the tables giving the results are presented in four columns - low, middle, high, mean. Each of the first three columns represents the percentage of students scoring in these areas, i.e.,

high - 5 - 6
middle - 3 - 4
low - 1 - 2.

The mean for the GIM represents a score on 12, while the mean for the other qualities represents a score on 6.

In order to be able to pass a judgment on the quality of performance represented by the results, after discussion, the members of the Technical Advisory Committee arrived at a consensus that the results of the tables would be analyzed according to the following scale:

using the combined results of the middle and high ranges, a percentage of
- 85% and above indicates a strength
- 80% - 85% indicates satisfactory achievement
- 80% and less indicates a need for improvement

e.g., Organization and Sequence (Grade 4 Story Writing)
middle/high 79.1% + 4.0% = 83.1% (indicates satisfactory achievement).

Markers' Comments

The markers' comments, collected at the time of marking, proved to be an invaluable help in forming judgments, and, wherever possible, were incorporated in the interpretations.

CHAPTER 3

Grade 4 Results

In the grade 4 test two written products, Story Writing and Report Writing, were assessed.

In the first task, Story Writing, students were presented with a starting idea: **"As I left home one morning for school I found a box".**

Following a ten-minute discussion in groups, students wrote a rough draft. The following day, they revised, edited, and re-wrote their stories.

Prior to the second task, Report Writing, students were encouraged to do research on an animal of their choice. The writing assignment required them to prepare a report for someone who knew nothing about the animal. The report was to include information about appearance, habitat, eating habits, and unusual or interesting features.

Both pieces of writing were marked, first, on a General Impressing Marking Scale and then marked according to nine Analytic Marking Scales by carefully trained markers who were also experienced français teachers at grade 4 level.

STORY WRITING

	Low	Middle	High	Mean
GIM	11.2%	80.7%	8.0%	6.32
1. Organization and Sequence	17.0	79.1	4.0	3.19
2. Wording and Style	19.6	75.9	4.5	3.16
3. Focus or Theme	20.6	73.6	5.8	3.17
4. Ideas	23.6	72.8	3.5	3.10
5. Detail/Elaboration	21.3	75.0	3.6	3.08
6. Sentence Structure	19.2	71.0	9.8	3.29
7. Usage	15.6	67.9	16.5	3.47
8. Punctuation/Capitals	8.5	59.8	31.7	3.92
9. Spelling	14.3	55.8	29.9	3.76

REPORT WRITING

	Low	Middle	High	Mean
GIM	9.9%	70.9%	19.2%	6.82
1. Organization and Sequence	19.2	69.2	11.6	3.35
2. Wording and Style	16.0	72.8	11.2	3.35
3. Focus or Theme	16.9	69.6	13.4	3.42
4. Ideas	20.1	64.7	15.2	3.10
5. Detail/Elaboration	28.1	60.7	11.1	3.08
6. Sentence Structure	19.2	66.1	14.7	3.38
7. Usage	14.3	64.7	21.0	3.56
8. Punctuation/Capitals	10.3	61.6	28.1	3.82
9. Spelling	12.0	58.5	29.5	3.82

NOTE: Number of students tested = 224

General Impression Marking

The GIM Scale attempts to rate compositions in a general global manner. Areas covered include the quality of thought evident in the paper, the effectiveness of the overall presentation, and the effectiveness of style and word choice. Both tasks, story writing and report writing, were rated twice on a scale of 0 - 6 by two different markers. The two scores were then combined for a score on 12.

Samples scoring in the high range had evidence of the following qualities:

High (5-6)

In this range, in story writing the paper has evidence of sound thinking on the part of the writer, that is, above what would be normally expected at this grade level. The quality of thought reflects a developmentally mature point of view. The paper is not overly egocentric or narrow in perspective. The organization of the paper indicates careful planning, with an idea or event following logically from the preceding one. The paper is presented in an effective fashion, and it follows the organization such that the reader has no difficulty in following the sequence of ideas or events of these words. The style is appropriate to the level of thought and word choice and use of these words reflect a grasp of language that is above average. The level of the paper is appropriate for the audience being addressed and fulfills the stated purpose.

For report writing the reader would expect to find a wealth of information on the chosen topic. Paragraphing should be used effectively as an organizational tool and the use of descriptive words should be above average. The writer must be able to write opening and closing paragraphs that are effective. The usage must be appropriate to the level of presentation and spelling attracts little or no attention.

Samples scoring in the middle range evidenced the following characteristics:

Middle (3-4)

In the middle range the paper had evidence of thinking on the part of the writer that is appropriate to the grade level of the student. The quality of thought reflects what would be expected at this age. In the case of story writing, although the paper is essentially egocentric in perspective, this does not interfere with the overall movement and organization of the paper. The paper is obviously planned though at times the writer may wander from the central thrust. The ideas or events are generally sequenced in a meaningful fashion: the style is generally clear and word choice and use reflect a grasp of language that would be expected at this grade level. The level of the paper may not, for the most part, take into account the audience being addressed, but, in general, it fulfills the purpose of the paper.

In the case of report writing, a paper in this range would have evidence of a quantity of information on the chosen topic, although, it is expected details may not be as abundant or as specific to the particular chosen topic as in the high range. Paragraphing should be used as an organizational tool even if not always correctly used. Sentences should be well constructed but may lack variety, and spelling and usage should be acceptable for this grade level.

Samples scoring in the low range evidenced the following characteristics:

Low (1-2)

For this category, the quality of thought evident in the story writing is obviously immature and below what is expected at grade level. The point of view is egocentric to the point that it interferes with the relating of ideas and events. The organization in the paper is difficult to follow and does not reflect any careful planning. Ideas and events do not follow each other logically or sequentially. The movement of the paper is interrupted by wandering thoughts and events or inappropriate information. The style is inconsistent and immature, with many repetitions. Word choice is unclear, inappropriate, and distracting. The writer seems to have no awareness of the audience or reader and seems to have no purpose in writing the paper.

A report in this range would reveal minimal knowledge of the subject, with few details. No attempt is made to catch the reader's attention in the opening, and there is no feeling of ending or closure. The vocabulary is limited, colourless, and does not aid description. Ideas are not presented in a logical or in an interesting way. Spelling and usage detract from the readability and general expression of the paper.

Results

Story Writing

High	(9-12)	8.0%
Medium	(5-8)	80.7%
Low	(0-4)	11.2%
Mean		6.32

Report Writing

High	(9-12)	19.2%
Medium	(5-8)	70.9%
Low	(0-4)	9.9%
Mean		6.82

In story writing, 88.7% scored in the middle and high range. In report writing 90.1% of the students scored in the middle and high ranges.

The results of the GIM show that an acceptable percentage of the grade 4 "français" students present a paper, either in report or story writing, where the quality of thought and expression is appropriate for the situation. In all aspects of organization and presentation, these papers demonstrated performance that was appropriate for a grade 4 "français" student.

STORY WRITING

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE

Generally the organization should follow a sequence of events. The paper should effectively introduce the situation in general, lead the reader clearly through the sequence of events, and come to closure. The writer should effectively introduce the setting and characters and build from this introduction. The introduction and conclusion should aid the reader in understanding the series of events.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- effective opening that catches the reader's interest
- clearly follows a sequence of events
- effective transitions from one event to another
- effective closing
- understandable conclusion

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- generally introduces the story
- does not capture the reader's interest
- has no necessary background or explanation of the story
- events are appropriately described, but not clearly laid out
- may not have used effective transitions
- may have a weak ending
- little or no sense of closure

LOW (1 OR 2)
- opening does not catch the interest of the reader
- necessary background is lacking
- sequence of events is confusing, left out, or inappropriately ordered
- no transition phrases
- reader is left with little or no feeling of closure or completeness
- story may leave the reader confused about what really happened
- confusion about the importance of events or the characters

Results

4.0% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
79.1% scored in the middle range (3-4)
17.0% scored in the low range (0-2)
Mean 3.19.

Eighty-three point one percent (83.1%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This would indicate a satisfactory performance in this area.

Interpretation

The greatest percentage (79.1%) of the students placed in the middle range in this area, with 49.6% scoring a 3 out of a score of 6. The students in middle and low ranges had some idea of beginning, middle, and end. Many of the opening paragraphs although introducing the story adequately were not effective in catching the interest of the reader. In many cases the events were appropriately described, but the sequence of events was confusing or inappropriately ordered with little use of effective transitions. Necessary background information was often lacking. There were a few good surprise endings, but very often the conclusion left the reader with little or no feeling of closure or completeness. However, these scores suggest that many of these writers have some sense of organization even if it is not fully developed.

2. WORDING AND STYLE

Word choice refers to the choice of vocabulary the writer makes in writing the story and how the writer strings those words together into phrases, sentences, or longer thought-units. Word choice needs to reflect both precision and maturity, as well as appropriateness to the audience being addressed. The writer should be aware of the level of the audience and explain words used in a highly specific or technical manner. The words and the ways in which they are strung together should be clearly understandable.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- reflects sensitivity to the audience
- words are precise and exact
- interesting style
- unusual or interesting words are used appropriately
- words help the reader clearly see and understand the story

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- words have appropriate referent but do not reflect a sensitivity to reader
- vocabulary is too general though correctly used

LOW (1 OR 2)
- words do not aid the reader in understanding the story and may interfere with comprehension
- words are colourless, non-engaging, uninteresting

Results

4.5% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
75.9% scored in the middle range (3-4)
19.6% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.16

Eighty point four percent (80.4%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This would indicate a satisfactory performance in this area, with some need for improvement.

Interpretation

Except in a few rare cases (4.5%), choice of vocabulary was rather weak; most of the students in the middle range (49.1% out of 75.9%) obtained a score of 3 out of a score of 6 in this area. For these students and for those in the low range, although oftentimes words were correctly used, much of the vocabulary was too general in nature for this type of writing. There was an overuse of non-specific words such as "interesting", "good" and very few synonyms were present. Words and style seemed colourless, non-engaging, and uninteresting.

3. FOCUS OR THEME

The writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the purpose of writing. She/he seems to have a central focus and maintains that throughout the piece. There seems to be a theme holding each of the story's elements together.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- central focus for the story
- develops elements so they directly relate to the central focus
- story focus is clearly discernible
- events have been sufficiently covered at the conclusion
- no unrelated details are included

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- central focus exists but elements are not clearly related to focus
- the purpose is not clearly identifiable
- at times, the writer interjects information, opinions, or details unrelated to the central focus
- intrusions do not seriously interfere with the thrust or movement
- at the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events have been covered but that the movement of the story has been interrupted

LOW (1 OR 2)
- story has no central focus or thematic movement
- unrelated information, opinions, and details seem to be added
- at the conclusion, the reader is likely to question the main point or purpose of the story

Results

5.8% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
73.6% were in the middle range (3-4)
20.6% in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.17

Seventy-nine point four percent (79.4%) of the students scored in the high and middle range. This would indicate that in this area the students are performing close to the satisfactory level but would need improvement.

Interpretation

Seventy-nine point four percent (79.4%) of the papers read were in the middle to high range where the focus or theme was concerned. In this area some weaknesses were apparent. At times the writer would interject information, opinions, or details unrelated to the central theme with little concern as to how they related to the events. It was also noted that quite a few story writers interrupted the flow of their story and got lost in their fantasy either unconsciously or because they wanted to add to the length of their story.

4. IDEAS

In the story, the basic idea was given. It was "**As I left home one morning for school I found a box.**

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- appropriate and meaningful ideas
- deals with the topic in a unique, creative fashion
- humour, interesting figures of speech or the like are used
- interesting point of view

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- generally sound
- does not reflect a unique or creative point of view
- no attempt has been made to employ humour, interesting figures of speech, or comparisons

LOW (1 OR 2)
- ideas do not reflect sound or creative thinking
- story is lifeless - ideas do not congeal as a whole
- writing reflects mental wandering rather than logical or creative thinking

Results

3.5% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
72.8% scored in the middle range (3-4)
23.6% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.10

Seventy-six point three percent (76.3%) of the students scored in the high and middle range indicating that this is an area needing improvement.

Interpretation

This is a weaker area. Only 3.5% of the students scored in the high range and presented their story in a manner reflecting sound or creative thinking. For the other students, 68.7% scored a 2 or 3 out of a possible 6 (see Preliminary Report). This seems to suggest that many of these writers need more help in developing unique and creative points of view.

These characteristics of writing will most benefit from classroom strategies that foster the development of ideas and vocabulary and promote organization and sentence variety on a regular basis in English and French, e.g., discussions, brainstorming, mapping/webbing, sentence manipulation. Research skills, organization and presentation techniques, and strategies to develop a theme, would benefit from instruction received in both languages and points to the need to maintain or implement the "writing process" in all "français" schools.

5. CHOICE OF DETAILS AND ELABORATION OF IDEAS

The details chosen by a writer, how particular ideas within a story have been elaborated, and how real and vivid the writing is can make the difference between a listless, lifeless paper and an exciting, engaging paper.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- details are appropriate to the telling of the story
- story is elaborated and interesting to the reader without getting carried away
- words, phrases, imagery, and figures of speech make the events real and clear to the reader

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- details chosen seem appropriate but the story, at times, seems to lack life
- elaboration may not be clear to the reader
- story is adequately described

LOW (1 OR 2)
- details do not seem appropriate to the purpose of the story
- writer has not appropriately elaborated the story and the writing is lifeless

Results

3.6% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
75.0% scored in the middle range (3-4)
21.3% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.08

Seventy-eight point six percent (78.6%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges indicating that this is an area needing improvement.

Interpretation

Choice of details and elaboration of ideas present difficulties for these students. Only 3.6% of the writers placed in the high range. Seventy-five percent (75%) scored in the middle range, but out of these, 51.8% obtained a 3. Another 20.5% scored a 2. Many of these papers were lifeless. Although, in many cases the details chosen were appropriate to the story, often the writing was uninteresting to the reader. In other cases, the lack of details did not allow the writing to come to life.

6. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- positive effect is created in the use of sentence structures
- writer has control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- writer has control of a number of sentence structures but at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy

LOW (1 OR 2)
- little more than simple sentences
- a small number of structures are repeated
- paper is boring or predictable
- writer has serious difficulties in presenting effectively constructed sentences

Results

9.8% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
71.0% scored in the middle range (3-4)
19.2% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.29

Eighty point eight percent (80.8%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This indicates that in this area the students perform at a satisfactory level for this grade.

Interpretation

In this area 9.8% of the students obtained a high score (5 out of a possible six) which indicates that these writers have control of a variety of sentence structures and employ them effectively. Seventy-one percent (71.0%) placed in the middle range with 40.6% of these students scoring a 3. In these pieces of writing, sentence structures were little more than simple sentences, with the subject/verb kind being prevalent and with a lack of sentences containing subordinate or dependent clauses. Where an attempt was made at using a more complex form, the run-on sentence became the norm and a lack of proper transition words was observed. Conjunctions such as "but, "and", "so" were often used at the beginning of sentences.

7. USAGE

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference and the like fall into the area of usage.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- the usage is correct and appropriate to the level of presentation of the material

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- few usage errors appear and they do not detract from the impact of the discourse

LOW (1 OR 2)
- errors detract substantially from the readability and the impression of the paper

Results

16.5% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
67.9% scored in the middle range (3-4)
15.6% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.47

Eighty-four point four percent (84.4%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that the students' performance in this area is satisfactory.

Interpretation

Sixteen point five percent (16.5%) of the students scored in the high range in the area of usage. This high figure indicates that these students are performing above grade level in this area. Another 67.9% placed in the middle range. Out of these, 38.4% obtained a 3 and 29.5% scored a 4 indicating that these writers were performing at the level expected by the markers. Usage errors that were present did not detract from the impact of the discourse. Some past tenses of verbs were incorrectly used, e.g., "brang for brought", "seen for saw". The errors in homonyms, "too-to-two, their-they're, its-it's", - indicated that the correct use of these elements had not been internalized.

8. PUNCTUATION AND USE OF CAPITALS

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- in general, the writer uses capitals and punctuates correctly
- capitals and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- errors in use of capitals and punctuation may be present but do not perceptibly detract from the clarity or readability of the paper

LOW (1 OR 2)

- errors in use of capitals and punctuation substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper

Results

31.7% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
59.8% scored in the middle range (3-4)
8.5% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.92

Ninety-one point five percent (91.5%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that this area is a strength in these students' writing.

Interpretation

With regard to the use of punctuation and capitals, 91.5% scored a 3 or above denoting a strength in the students' writing. In general, the errors that were present did not perceptibly detract from the clarity and readability of the paper, and many of those observed were expected at this stage due to interference from the students' first language. An interference was apparent in capital letters of days and months and proper adjectives such as "Egyptian", "English", "French". The word "I" was often written "i", but the period and question mark were generally used correctly; a lack of commas separating words in a list was evident. Some attempt was made to use quotation marks.

9. SPELLING

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- spelling attracts little or no attention
- when errors in words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the possible spelling

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- few spelling errors appear in the writing, but in general the errors do not detract from the impact or readability of the paper
- most "guesses" are reasonable

LOW (1 OR 2)
- errors in spelling detract substantially from the readability and impression of the paper
- the reader must stop and puzzle over words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended

Results

29.9% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
55.8% scored in the middle range (3-4)
14.3% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.76

Eighty-five point seven percent (85.7%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This indicates that this area is a strength in the students' writing.

Interpretation

Spelling scores indicate that this area was one of the strongest for these students with 85.7% of the samples scoring in the high/middle range. In most cases the spelling errors that appeared in the writing did not detract from the impact or readability of the paper. In fact, it was felt that basic spelling words appropriate to a grade 4 level were already well in place. Where spelling errors appeared, they were predictable and in many cases, due to the influence of the student's first language. Interferences were detected in words that contained the "sh" and "ch" and "w" and "wh" sounds, e.g., "bruched for brushed", "Britiche for British". It was noticed that the inappropriate use of the final "e" was prevalent, e.g., "wase for was", "tooke for took", and that many similar sounding words were misspelled, e.g., "clou for clue", "brun for brown", "humain for human", "allez for alley".

REPORT WRITING

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE

In report writing the organization of detail should be clear and arranged according to the sub-topic. The introduction and conclusion should aid the reader in thinking about and understanding the topic.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- effective opening that catches the interest of the reader
- sub-topic details are arranged in paragraphs
- effective closing that tells the reader that the report is finished

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- attempts an opening but does not catch the interest of the reader
- sub-topic details are generally accurate and grouped appropriately but not always paragraphed
- weak ending, no sense of closure

LOW (1 OR 2)
- no attempt to catch the reader's attention in the opening
- sub-topic details are not always accurate and are ordered inappropriately
- no feeling of ending or closure

Results

11.6% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
69.2% scored in the middle range (3-4)
19.2% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.35

Eighty point eight percent (80.8%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This would indicate a satisfactory performance by the students in this area.

Interpretation

Scores in this area show that a greater percentage of writers placed in the high range for report writing (11.6%) than for story writing (4.0%). Another 32.1% scored a 4. In the papers scoring in the middle and low ranges, the students' writings revealed some knowledge and application of introduction and conclusion although in many cases these two elements were rather weak. Very often the opening was not effective, and one was left with no sense of closure. Paragraphing was usually present, although sub-topic details were not always ordered appropriately.

2. WORDING/STYLE

Word choice refers to the choice of vocabulary the writer makes in writing the story and how the writer strings those words together into phrases, sentences, or longer thought-units. In report writing, the vocabulary should be precise and topic-related (appropriate). The words and ways in which they are strung together should be clearly understandable.

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- wide choice of descriptive words is used to create the image for the reader

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- limited choice of descriptive words, some repetition
- vocabulary may be too general

LOW (1 OR 2)

- vocabulary is very limited, colourless, does not aid description

Results

11.2% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
72.8% scored in the middle range (3-4)
16.0% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.35

Eighty-four percent (84.0%) scored in the high and middle ranges. This indicates a satisfactory performance by the students in this area.

Interpretation

Eleven point two percent (11.2%) of the writers scored in the high range where one observed an appropriate choice of descriptive words. For those in the middle range (72.8%), much of the vocabulary was vague and inaccurate. Few descriptive words were used and because of a lack of alternative words or synonyms, there was much repetition.

3. FOCUS OR THEME

The writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the purpose of writing. She/he seems to have a central focus and maintains that throughout the piece. There seems to be a theme holding each of the story's elements together.

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- central focus for the story is present
- develops elements so they directly relate to the central focus
- story focus is clearly discernible
- events have been sufficiently covered at the conclusion
- no unrelated details are included

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- central focus exists but elements are not clearly related to focus
- the purpose is not clearly identifiable
- at times, the writer interjects information, opinions, or details unrelated to the central focus
- intrusions do not seriously interfere with the thrust or movement
- at the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events have been covered but that the movement of the story has been interrupted

LOW (1 OR 2)

- story has no central focus or thematic movement
- unrelated information, opinions, and details seem to be added
- at the conclusion, the reader is likely to question the main point or purpose of the story

Results

13.4% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
69.6% scored in the middle range (3-4)
16.9% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.42

Eighty-three percent (83.0%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This would indicate that in this area the students are performing at a satisfactory level.

Interpretation

The scores on focus show that, in general, the students performed better on report writing in this area than they did in story writing. In 83.0% of the papers, the central focus was maintained throughout, while 16.9% of the students experienced difficulty in developing the topic fully. It was evident, in several cases, that the writer found it easier to stick to the theme when writing a piece of non-fiction which he/she had researched than to do the same in the narrative task.

4. IDEAS

In the report writing task the basic idea was given. The student was asked to write a report on an animal of his choice.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- appropriate and meaningful development of basic idea
- dealt with the topic in a unique, creative fashion
- humour, interesting figures of speech or the like are used
- interesting point of view

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- generally sound development of the idea
- does not reflect a unique or creative point of view
- no attempt has been made to employ, humour, interesting figures of speech or comparisons

LOW (1 OR 2)
- development of the idea does not reflect sound of creative thinking
- story is lifeless - ideas do not congeal as a whole
- reflect mental wandering rather than logical or creative thinking

Results

15.2% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
64.7% scored in the middle range (3-4)
20.1% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.10

Seventy-nine point nine percent (79.9%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This would indicate that in this area the students are performing close to the satisfactory level but would need improvement.

Interpretation

With regards to the ideas, 15.2% of the students dealt with the basic idea in a creative and interesting way. Another 64.7% were able to present a report that developed the subject in an appropriate and meaningful fashion, whereas, the other 20.1% found it difficult to deal with the subject in a lively, descriptive style.

5. CHOICE OF DETAILS AND ELABORATION OF IDEAS

The details chosen by a writer, how particular ideas within a paper have been elaborated, and how real and vivid the writing is can make the difference between a listless, lifeless paper and an exciting, engaging paper.

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- reveals a wide knowledge of the subject shown by use of many details
- details are chosen in to be of interest to the reader
- description is alive, real to the reader, and is clear

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- displays adequate knowledge of the subject but rich detail lacking
- the writing seems to lack life

LOW (1 OR 2)

- minimal knowledge of the subject, few details

Results

11.1% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
60.7% scored in the middle range (3-4)
28.1% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.08

Seventy-one point eight percent (71.8%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This would indicate that this is an area where students are weak and need improvement.

Interpretation

The scores on choice of details and elaboration of ideas are consistent with the scores on the analytical scale ideas. Seventy-one point eight percent (71.8%) of the writers revealed adequate knowledge of the subject with 11.1% of them showing that they had a wide knowledge of the animal chosen by the amount of details they elaborated and by sharing this with the reader in a lively, descriptive style. Twenty eight point one percent (28.1%) of the students showed a minimal knowledge of their subject as evidenced by the lack of details in spite of the fact that research on the topic of their choice was to have been done the night before.

6. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate.

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- positive effect is created in the use of sentence structures
- writer has control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- writer has control of a number of sentence structures but at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy

LOW (1 OR 2)

- little more than simple sentences
- a small number of structures are repeated
- paper is boring or predictable
- writer has serious difficulties in presenting effectively constructed sentences

Results

14.7% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
66.1% scored in the middle range (3-4)
19.2% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.38

Eighty point eight percent (80.8%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This score, although satisfactory according to the scale, indicates that the students would need improvement in this area.

Interpretation

In the high range where 14.7% of the students placed, there was evidence of a variety of sentences: simple, complex, inverted, exclamatory, etc. In the middle range (66.1%) less complex sentences were present; sentences were shorter and of simpler structure, but in most cases they were effectively constructed. In the low range (19.2%), little more than simple sentences were used and run-on or incomplete sentences were repeatedly observed.

7. USAGE

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference, and the like fall into the area of usage.

HIGH (5 OR 6)
- the usage is correct and appropriate to the level of presentation of the material

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
- few usage errors appear and they do not detract from the impact of the discourse

LOW (1 OR 2)
- errors detract substantially from the readability and the impression of the paper

Results

21.0% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
64.7% scored in the middle range (3-4)
14.3% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.56

Eighty-five point seven percent (85.7%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates satisfactory performance in this area by these students.

Interpretation

As in story writing, many students performed at the expected level in the area of usage in report writing. In 85.7% of the papers, usage was correct and appropriate for the level of presentation and errors did not detract from the impact of the report. Nevertheless, difficulties were found in:

- subject/verb agreement, e.g., "elephant weigh a lot",
- verb tense and pronoun reference especially when there was a change in paragraphing,
- the misuse or lack of apostrophe in contractions.

All of these difficulties were found in the writings of the 14.3% who scored in the low range.

8. PUNCTUATION AND USE OF CAPITALS

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- in general, the writer uses capitals and punctuates correctly
- capitals and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- errors in use of capitals and punctuation may be present but do not perceptibly detract from the clarity or readability of the paper

LOW (1 OR 2)

- errors in use of capitals and punctuation substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper

Results

28.1% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
61.6% scored in the middle range (3-4)
10.3% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.82

Eighty-nine point seven percent (89.7%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that this area is a strength in the students' writing.

Interpretation

Punctuation and the use of capitals appear as a strength for these students with 89.7% of them performing in the middle to high range. Again, it is noted that the concept of punctuation and capitalization is reinforced by the students' knowledge of these concepts in French. On the other hand, where errors in these skills occur, they are often due to interference from their first language.

9. SPELLING

HIGH (5 OR 6)

- spelling attracts little or no attention
- if errors in mature words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the words being used

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)

- few spelling errors appear in the writing, but in general the errors do not detract from the impact or readability of the paper
- most "guesses" are reasonable

LOW (1 OR 2)

- errors in spelling substantially detract from the readability and impression of the paper
- the reader must stop and puzzle over words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended

Results

29.5% of the students scored in the high range (5-6)
58.5% scored in the middle range (3-4)
12.0% scored in the low range (0-2) with a mean of 3.82

Eighty-eight percent (88.0%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that this area is a strength in these students' writing.

Interpretation

The students appear to be relatively strong in spelling with 29.5% of them scoring in the high range and 58.5% in the middle range. It was recognized that many of the basic words were well on the way to being mastered by many. A number of words misspelled because of interference from the first language in no way detracted from the impact or readability of the text, e.g., "forêst, exemple, celeri, carotte".

SUMMARY

The markers for the grade 4 "français" test had been trained on samples taken from "français schools" and had established a marking standard which can and should be expected of students who are in the second year of their English Language Arts (Anglais) program. The marking standards take into consideration the time element and the "transfer and interference" factor. The results reflect their expectations and their awareness of these constraints.

The table of results on story writing (p.13) shows that, in all areas of writing, a very small percentage of the writers scored in the high range. The percentage in the low range reflects what would be expected in an average classroom (probably one out of 5 students). In this range, the majority of the students scored a 2 out of a possible 6, rather than a 1 (Preliminary Report, Franco-Manitoban Schools). The highest percentages were found in the middle range where the majority of students scored a 3. Therefore, the greatest percentage of students tested scored either a 2, 3, or 4 in all areas of writing, with very few 1's, 5's, 6's. (Preliminary Report)

Similar remarks can be made about report writing, although, in this instance, a slight shift in percentages has occurred from the middle range to the high range with the lows remaining rather constant. This would indicate that a small percentage of the students tested are functioning above expectancy level, and that a majority of the remaining sample, although experiencing certain difficulties, (which are expected at this stage of their L.A. program), are evidencing all the qualities of good beginning writers in their second language.

This is borne out by the GIM results which show that an acceptable percentage of grade 4 "français" students present a paper, either in report writing (19.2% - 70.9% - 9.9%) or in story writing (8.0% - 80.7% - 11.2%), where the quality of thought is appropriate for the situation, and in some cases above what would be expected. In all aspects of organization and presentation the papers demonstrated performance that was acceptable for a grade 4 "français" student.

Analytical Scale

Mechanics. In the two assigned writing tasks, approximately 4 out of 5 students placed in the middle/high range in all areas of the analytical scales with mechanics (punctuation, use of capitals, and spelling) appearing as a strength. With regard to the use of punctuation and capitals, 91.5% scored a 3 or above out of a possible 6 for story writing and 89.7% obtained the same score in report writing. In general, the errors that were present did not perceptibly detract from the clarity and readability of the paper, and many of those observed could be expected at this stage due to interference from the students' first language. A strong interference was apparent in capital letters of days and months and such words as "Egyptian", "English", French". The word "I" was often written "i". The period and question mark were generally used correctly. A lack of commas separating words in a list was evident. Again, it is noted that the concept of punctuation and capitalization is reinforced by the students' knowledge of these concepts in French. On the other hand, where errors in those skills occur, they are often due to interference from their first language.

Spelling scores indicate that this was also one of the strongest for these students with 85.7% in story writing and 88.0% in report writing scoring in the high/middle range. In most cases, the spelling errors that appeared in the writing did not detract from the impact or readability of the paper. In fact, it was felt that basic spelling words appropriate to a grade 4 level were already well in place. Where spelling errors appeared, they were predictable and in many cases due to the influence of the students' first language. Interferences were detected in words that contained "ch" and "sh", and "w" and "wh" sounds, i.e., "bruched for brushed", "Britiche for British". It was noticed that the inappropriate use of the final "e" was prevalent, e.g., "wase for was", "tooke for took", and that many similar sounding words were misspelled, "allez for alley", "clou for clue", "forêst for forest", "céleri for celery".

In 84.4% of the stories and 85.7% of the reports, usage was correct and appropriate for the level of presentation, and errors did not detract from the impact of the piece. Nevertheless, difficulties were found in the following elements which indicated that the correct use had not been internalized:

- verb tense and pronoun reference especially when there was a change in paragraphing,
- the misuse or lack of apostrophe in contractions,
- errors in homonyms, e.g., their-there-they're, its-it's, too-to-two.

Organization and Sequence. Scores in this area show that a greater number of writers placed in the high range for report writing (11.6%) than for story writing (4.0%). However, in story writing more students scored a 3 or a 4 out of a possible 6 than for report writing. In both pieces of writing, it was felt that the students' writings revealed some knowledge and application of introduction and conclusion, although, in many cases these two elements were rather weak. In story writing, many of the opening paragraphs failed to catch the interest of the reader. In many cases the events were appropriately described, but the sequence of events was confusing or inappropriately ordered with little use of effective transitions. Necessary background information was often lacking. There were a few good surprise endings, but very often the conclusion left the reader with little or no feeling of closure or completeness. In report writing, paragraphing was usually present, although, sub-topic details were not always ordered appropriately. These scores suggest that many of these writers had some sense of organization even if it is underdeveloped.

Wording and Style is an area where weaknesses were detected. Much of the vocabulary in both pieces of writing was too general, imprecise, and vague. Few descriptive words were used; there was an overuse of non-specific words such as "interesting" and "good". Very few synonyms were present and, so, there was much repetition.

Focus. The scores on focus, where the writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the theme, show that, in general, the students performed better in report writing in this area than they did in story writing. In 83% of the papers, the central focus was maintained throughout while 16.9% of the students experienced some difficulty in developing the topic fully.

It was evident that in several cases, the writer found it easier to stick to the theme when writing a piece of non-fiction which he/she had researched than to do the same in the narrative task. In story writing, some weaknesses were apparent. At times the writer would interject information, opinions, or details unrelated to the central theme with little concern as to how they related to the events. Quite a few story writers interrupted the flow of their story and got lost in their fantasy either unconsciously or because they wanted to add to the length of their story.

Sentence Structure. In the area of sentence structure, 9.8% of the students in story writing and 14.7% in report writing scored in the high range. This score indicates that these writers have control of a variety of sentence structures and employ them effectively, e.g., simple, complex, inverted, exclamatory. In the middle range (71.0% and 66.1%), less complex sentences were present, sentences were shorter and of simpler structure but in most cases they were effectively constructed. In the low range, sentence structures were little more than simple sentences, with the subject/verb kind being prevalent and with a lack of sentences containing subordinate or dependent clauses. Where an attempt was made at using a more complex form, the run-on sentence became the norm and a lack of transition words was observed. Conjunctions such as "but", "and", "so" were often used at the beginning of sentences.

Ideas. With regard to ideas, 15.2% of the students, in report writing dealt with the basic idea in a creative and interesting way. Another 64.7% were able to present a report that developed the subject in an appropriate and meaningful fashion, whereas, the other 20.1% found it difficult to deal with the subject in a lively, descriptive style. The scores were somewhat low range in story writing. Only 3.5% of the students scored in the high range and presented their story reflecting sound or creative thinking. For the other students, 68.7% scored a 2 or a 3 out of a possible 6. This seems to suggest that many of the writers have some sense of what makes an engaging story but would need more help in developing unique and creative points of view.

Details and Elaboration of Ideas. The scores of details and elaboration of ideas are consistent with the scores of No. 4 on the analytical scale, "Ideas". In report writing, 71.8% of the writers revealed adequate knowledge of the subject with 11.1% of them showing that they have a wide knowledge of the animal chosen by the amount of details they elaborated and by sharing this with the reader in a lively descriptive style. Twenty-eight point one percent (28.1%) of the students showed a minimal knowledge of their subject as evidenced by the lack of details in spite of the fact that research on the topic of their choice was to have been done the night before. In story writing, only 3.6% of the writers placed in the high range. Seventy-five percent (75%) scored in the middle range, but out of these, 51.8% scored a three. Another 20.5% scored a 2 out of a possible 6. Many of these papers were listless and lifeless rather than interesting to the reader. Although details chosen were, in many cases, appropriate to the story, often the writing lacked voice: the lack of details did not allow the writing to come to life. This implies that appropriate pre-writing activities would greatly enhance the abilities of all students in this area.

Overview

To sum up, GIM results show than an acceptable percentage of the grade 4 "français" students can write a paper, either in story or report form, where the quality of thought expression and effectiveness of overall organization and presentation is appropriate for the grade level, taking into consideration the constraints of the English Language Arts program.

The analytical scale shows strength in the mechanics of writing, e.g., punctuation, capitals, spelling, usage, in spite of interferences from the first language in some areas. These results might be indicative of transfers of learning occurring from one language to another, although it is more difficult to pinpoint transfers than it is to pinpoint interferences. The transfers of learning would compensate for the time constraint placed on the teaching of English Language Arts in a Franco-Manitoban school

Areas which need to be strengthened are those of organization and sequence, sentence structure, focus, word choice, and, particularly, ideas and elaboration.

CHAPTER 4

Grade 8 Results

The grade 8 test was composed of three parts:

PART I - Persuasive Writing (Personal Opinion)
PART II - Narrative Writing
PART III - Spelling Dictation.

PART I: In Persuasive Writing students were asked to take a position for or against an issue and to convince the reader to accept the writer's viewpoint.

There were two sessions set aside for this test. The first session allowed the student 10 minutes to decide upon a position: 10 minutes to share ideas with a partner; and 25 minutes to write a rough draft.

The second session of 50 minutes was to be spent in revising, editing, and proofreading and rewriting the final draft.

PART II: In Narrative Writing the student had to construct a story set in one of four time periods. The story begins as the writer leaves a time machine.

Two sessions were set aside for PART II. The first session (45 minutes) allowed time for the preparation of a rough draft. The second session (50 minutes) was to be used for revising, editing, proofreading, and rewriting the final draft.

PART III: The Spelling test comprised a list of 24 selected words.

PERSUASIVE WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	20.0%	57.5%	22.5%	6.64
1. Organization and Sequence	23.5	60.5	16.0	3.38
2. Wording and Style	19.0	66.5	14.5	3.36
3. Focus or Theme	17.5	62.0	20.5	3.60
4. Ideas	23.5	62.5	14.0	3.35
5. Detail/Elaboration	26.0	61.0	13.0	3.26
6. Sentence Structure	24.0	51.0	25.0	3.48
7. Usage	14.0	55.5	30.5	3.77
8. Punctuation/Capitals	6.5	52.0	41.5	4.17
9. Spelling	5.0	34.5	60.5	4.51

NARRATIVE WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	12.2%	62.8%	25.0%	6.99
1. Organization and Sequence	16.8	62.3	20.9	3.60
2. Wording and Style	17.9	63.2	18.9	3.42
3. Focus or Theme	16.8	64.3	18.9	3.55
4. Ideas	20.4	59.7	19.9	3.47
5. Detail/Elaboration	25.0	59.7	15.3	3.32
6. Sentence Structure	23.0	58.1	18.9	3.37
7. Usage	19.9	60.7	19.4	3.45
8. Punctuation/Capitals	14.8	47.4	37.8	3.89
9. Spelling	12.2	47.0	40.8	3.97

NOTE: Number of students tested = 200

General Impression Marking

General Impression Marking is a judgment about the overall quality of the student's writing given the purpose of the writing and the audience to which it is addressed. It attempts to rate compositions in a general, global manner. Areas covered include the quality of thought evident in the paper, the effectiveness of the overall organization, the effectiveness of the overall presentation, and the effectiveness of style and word choice. Evaluation of specific attributes of writing are left to the analytic marking scales.

Both tasks, persuasive writing and narrative writing were rated twice on a scale of 0-6 by two different markers (0's were assigned if there was insufficient material to rate). The two scores were then combined for a score on 12.

The samples which scored in the high range showed evidence of the following characteristics:

High (5-6)

These papers had evidence of sound thinking reflecting a mature point of view. Careful planning was apparent in the organization, and the style was appropriate to the level of thought and organization of the paper. The word choice in these papers reflected a mature grasp of language and language use. The audience had been identified as the student's classmates, and the level of the paper was appropriate for the audience being addressed. A slightly higher score was obtained on the narrative piece than on the persuasive writing (24.5%) and this may be due to the different genres of writing that both tasks represented. The narratives were longer than the persuasive papers and writers were inclined to take more risks when writing their stories.

The samples which scored in the middle range denoted the following qualities:

Middle (3-4)

In this category students' writings are judged to be appropriate to their grade level but reflect a level of maturity less than adult-like. The organization of the paper is generally appropriate, though the writer might have been more careful in planning or carrying out the organizational pattern. At times the paper may wander from the central thrust or movement. The style may reflect inconsistencies or repetitions that are distracting. Word choice is indicative of the maturity of the student. In general, the paper achieves its identified purpose, but it may wander or not take advantage of obvious opportunities in achieving that purpose.

Low (1-2)

In this range, the thinking that is evident in the paper seems immature and inconsistent, reflecting an identifiably egocentric point of view. The organization of the paper is difficult to follow and does not reflect careful planning. Wandering discourse, inappropriate information interrupt the thrust and movement of the paper: the style is of varying consistency with many repetitive and uninteresting structures. Word choice is unsuitable and shallow. The writer seems to have little consideration for the reader and does not consistently address the identified purpose of the paper.

Results on 12

Persuasive Writing				Narrative Writing			
High	(9 - 12)	22.5%		High	(9 - 12)	25.0%	
Middle	(5 - 8)	57.5%		Middle	(5 - 8)	62.8%	
Low	(0 - 4)	20.0%		Low	(0 - 4)	12.2%	
Mean			6.64	Mean			6.85

In persuasive writing 90.0% of students scored in the middle and high ranges. In narrative writing 87.8% of the students scored in the middle and high ranges.

These results indicate that an acceptable percentage of the grade 8 "français" students present a paper in both genres of writing where the quality of thought and expression is appropriate for the grade level. In all aspects of organization and presentation, a good percentage of papers demonstrated performance that was acceptable for a grade 8 "français" student. It was felt that these students had a general awareness of the qualities and attributes particular to the two tasks.

PERSUASIVE WRITING

In this task, the writer was asked to take a position for or against an issue and to write in order to convince the reader.

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE (for personal opinion essay)

In personal opinion writing, the organization should follow a logical, usually causal, sequence. The essay should indicate that the topic has been effectively introduced, the major points should follow one another logically, and the paper should come to an effective conclusion. Organization and sequence is probably most evident in the major topics and in the concluding paragraph.

HIGH (5 OR 6):
The writer has written an effective opening that will catch the interest of the reader. The organization follows a logical sequence. The closing is effective in that it leads the reader to feel that the paper will be complete and brings the essay to a conclusion.

MIDDLE (3 or 4):
The writer generally introduces the subject but does nothing to catch the interest of the reader. Although all the points presented may be valid or logical arguments, they do not seem ordered in the most effective manner. The paper may have a weak ending or may leave the reader with little or no sense of closure.

LOW (1 or 2):
The essay does not reflect an effective opening and the major points in the paper are not logical or valid. The sequence of major topics does not seem to follow any logical pattern. The conclusion leaves the reader with little or no sense of closure. The entire essay leaves the reader confused about the arguments or their importance.

Results

High	(5-6)	- 16.0%	
Middle	(3-4)	- 60.5%	
Low	(0-2)	- 23.5%	Mean 3.38

Seventy-six point five percent (76.5%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that students' writing needs improvement in this area.

Interpretation

In this area, 3 out of 4 students placed either in the middle or high range (16.0% for high - 60.5% for middle). For the students scoring in the high range the papers were well planned and organized. The introduction caught the attention of the reader, the organization followed a logical sequence, and the closing was effective in that it lead the reader to feel the paper was complete. For the 60.5% of the students in the middle range, difficulties were encountered in one or more of these areas: the sequential and logical presentation of points and in the categorization of arguments that belonged together in the same paragraph. In many cases, conclusions were sketchy and not summative, lacked a "wrap-up" element, and left the reader with little or no sense of closure. The students in the low range encountered most or all of these difficulties.

2. WORDING AND STYLE

Wording refers to the choice of vocabulary the writer makes in the paper. Style refers to the ways in which those words are strung together by phrases, sentences, or longer thought-units. Word choice needs to reflect both precision and maturity, as well as appropriateness to the audience being addressed. The writer should be aware of the level of his/her audience and explain words used in a highly specific or technical manner. The writer should also strive for an interesting, engaging style, one that is both easy to read and understand with sentences varying in length and structure. Both wording and style need to be direct and clearly understandable.

HIGH (5 OR 6):
The words chosen by the writer reflect sensitivity to the audience being addressed. The words are precise and exact, with clear reference. The style is interesting, sentences are varied as to length and structure when appropriate, and the structures are clear and easy to read and understand. The style is engaging, and the words help the reader clearly "see" and understand the sequence of the argument.

MIDDLE (3 or 4):
The words chosen by the writer may have appropriate referents, but they do not reflect a sensitivity to the reader/audience. The emphasis seems to be on the content, rather than on the communication. When technical or specific words are used, they are not well-explained or defined. The style is repetitive to the point of being noticeable, or inappropriately long or short sentences interfere, at times, with the ease of reading. Though correctly used, vocabulary may be too general for the type of writing.

LOW (1 or 2):
The writer seems to have no sense of audience whatsoever. Words or phrases chosen may not aid the reader in understanding the argument and may interfere with comprehension. Sentences are either too long to be read with ease, or too short to create a flow. The words and style seem colourless, non-engaging, uninteresting.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	14.5%	
Middle	(3-4)	-	66.5%	
Low	(0-2)	-	19.0%	Mean 3.36

Eighty-one percent (81.0%) of the students performed in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that performance in this area is satisfactory.

Interpretation

Eighty-one percent (81.0%) of the students performed in the high and middle range. In the high range, students displayed innovative styles in their presentation such as the use of an editorial or letter. Many reflected a sensitivity to the audience being addressed. In the middle range, some writers placed emphasis on content rather than communication, often the vocabulary was too general for this type of writing, and there was a lack of expressive verbs. In the low range, students encountered difficulties in choosing words and phrases that were suitable to express the purpose of the writing. Some papers revealed a lack of awareness that written language cannot be manipulated like oral language.

3. FOCUS OR THEME

The writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the purpose of writing. She/he seems to have a central focus and maintains that throughout the piece. There seems to be a theme holding each of the essay's elements together. Focus or theme are probably best reflected in the paper's title, the major thesis, and the conclusion.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The writer clearly has a central focus for the paper and develops each of the elements in the essay so that it directly relates to that central focus. The purpose of the paper is clearly discernible. The writer does not present information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central purpose of the essay. After reading, the reader feels as if the topic has been sufficiently covered without undue reference to unimportant or unrelated material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4):
The writer has a central focus for the paper, but the relationship of each of the elements within the paper is not clearly related to the focus. The purpose of the paper is not always clearly identifiable and, at times, the writer has interjected information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central focus. These materials, however, do not seriously interfere with the thrust or movement of the essay. At the conclusion, the reader feels as if the argument or explanation has been covered, but that the movement of the paper or plan has been interrupted along the way by unnecessary, incomplete, or unrelated elements.

LOW (1 or 2):
The paper does not seem to have a meaningful central focus or thematic movement. Elements within the paper seem unrelated to any central purpose. Information, opinions, and details seem to be added with little concern as to how they relate to the total argument or explanation. At the conclusion, the reader is likely to wonder what the main point or purpose of the essay was.

Results

High (5-6) - 20.5%
Middle (3-4) - 62.0%
Low (0-2) - 17.5% Mean 3.60

Eighty-two point five percent (82.5%) of the students placed in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that students' performance in this area is satisfactory.

Interpretation

In this attribute of writing 62.0% placed in the middle range, 20.5% in the high range and 17.5% in the low. The high (20.5% of the students) had a good grasp of the focus and developed each of the elements in the essay so that it directly related to the topic. The writers in the middle range also had a theme holding each of the papers' details together. Although some unrelated information and opinions may have been interjected, the reader felt at the conclusion that he/she had been convinced by the argument provided. In the low range many of the elements were unrelated to the topic. Information, details, and opinions had been added without any concern about how they fitted into the argument or explanation.

4. IDEAS

The ideas presented in a paper reflect the quality, uniqueness, and creativity of the thinking involved in the development of the paper. The selection of the topic, the choice of point of view, the selection and shaping of details are all involved in the presentation and development of the ideas.

HIGH (5 or 6)

The writer has selected an interesting, engaging topic, has selected appropriate and meaningful ideas to discuss and describe, and may have dealt with the topic in a unique, creative fashion. Humour, interesting figures of speech, or the like, may be used or attempted in relating events. An interesting point of view may have been selected.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)

Though the ideas presented in the paper are generally sound, they do not reflect a unique or creative point of view in dealing with the topic. No attempt has been made to employ humour, interesting figures of speech, comparisons or the like in order to make the paper more interesting or lively.

LOW (1 or 2)

The ideas presented do not reflect sound or creative thinking. Not only is the paper lifeless, but the ideas do not congeal as a whole and seem to reflect mental wandering rather than logical or creative thinking.

Results

High (5-6) - 14.0%
Middle (3-4) - 62.5%
Low (0-2) - 23.5% Mean 3.35

Seventy-six point five percent (76.5%) of the students performed in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that students' writing in this area needs improvement.

Interpretation

This area was identified as being one of the weaker ones with 23.5% of the papers in the low range. The writers in the high range had selected interesting topics and dealt with them in unique, creative fashion. In the middle range, many of the ideas in the papers were generally sound but did not reflect a unique or creative point of view in dealing with the topic. It was felt that although uniqueness and creativity may be difficult to teach, a greater variety and number of pre-writing activities would certainly improve this area. Papers in the low range did not reflect sound logical thinking.

5. CHOICE OF DETAILS AND ELABORATION OF IDEAS

What is important here are the details chosen by a writer, how particular ideas within the essay have been elaborated, and how the details are related.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The details chosen by the writer are appropriate to the explanation or argument. The details appropriately elaborate or illustrate the major points of the paper and are sequenced in a logical, meaningful fashion.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
The details chosen seem appropriate to the explanation or argument but, at times, the details may not be sequenced appropriately or logically. The supporting details, though appropriate to the paper as a whole, may not relate directly to the major points under which they appear.

LOW (1 or 2)
The details chosen by the writer do not seem appropriate to the purpose of the paper or to the audience. The writer has not adequately elaborated the explanation or argument. Details do not relate to major points or to a valid, meaningful purpose or focus in the essay.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	13.0%
Middle	(3-4)	-	61.0%
Low	(0-2)	-	26.0%
Mean	3.26		

Seventy-four percent (74.0%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This is a weaker area and needs improvement.

Interpretation

With 26.0% of the students performing in the low range, it was felt that this area of writing would need more attention. The students performing in the high range (13.0%) chose appropriate details to illustrate the points of the paper and sequenced them logically. For students in the middle range (61.0%), difficulties in sequential and logical presentations were apparent. Many times the writer was not able to prove and support his/her point with substantial and meaningful information. The students in the low range (26.0%) were unable to choose details appropriate to the purpose of the paper or to elaborate the explanation. Inadequacies in the collection of details or examples and in the elaboration of these may be a reflection of shortcomings in pre-writing preparation. Various revision activities (especially group and peer) would also help in the selection of appropriate details and in the clarity of their elaboration.

6. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate.

HIGH (5 or 6)

A positive effect is created by the author in the use of sentence structures. The writer seems to have control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively in communicating.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)

Although the writer seems to have control of a number of sentence structures, at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy, or the writer may not have taken advantage of opportunities to create a positive effect in varying or repeating sentence structures.

LOW (1 or 2)

The sentence structures are little more than simple sentences; a small number of structures are repeated throughout the paper so that the paper becomes boring or predictable. The writer seems to have serious difficulties in presenting effectively constructed sentences.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	25.0%
Middle	(3-4)	-	51.0%
Low	(0-2)	-	24.0%
Mean	3.48		

Seventy-six percent (76.0%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This area in the students' writing needs improvement.

Interpretation

This quality of writing was also targeted as one that needs attention as 24.0% placed in the low range of performance. For those students who scored 1's and 2's out of a possible 6, it was obvious that they did not take risks with sentence manipulation by trying different orders or complex sentences. They stuck to a simple subject/verb order type of sentence throughout and avoided compound and complex sentences. Many times the sentence structures were not appropriate or effective. In the middle range, although students seemed to have control of a number of sentence structures, the structures were, at times, ambiguous or clumsy. However, another 25.0% performed in the high range indicating ability on the part of these writers to control a variety of sentence structures and to employ them effectively in communicating.

7. USAGE

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference and the like fall into the area of usage.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The usage is correct and appropriate to the level of presentation of the material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Few usage errors appear and they do not detract from the impact of the discourse.

LOW (1 or 2)
Errors detract substantially from the readability and the impression of the paper.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	30.5%
Middle	(3-4)	-	55.5%
Low	(0-2)	-	14.0%
Mean	3.77		

Eighty-six percent (86.0%) of the students scored in the high and middle ranges. This indicates that this area is a strength in the students' writing.

Interpretation

The results in this area indicate that many elements of usage are already well in place. Eighty-six percent (86.0%) of the students are performing at a level appropriate to their grade level. Few usage errors appeared and those that were present did not detract from the impact of the discourse. However, some errors appeared in the following areas:

- pronoun usage
  switching from singular to plural sometimes within the same sentence
- lack of clarity in pronoun reference
- misuse of relative pronouns - e.g., "that" "who" "which"
- inconsistency in verb tense usage - e.g., going from present to past and back again in the same paragraph
- misplaced adjectives and adverbs
- misuse of prepositions "from, to, in, at, into"
- overuse of the article "the", e.g., "Why should there be a 9 o'clock curfew for the grade 8 students?"
- misplaced or lack of apostrophe in contractions, e.g., "dont" "d'ont" "c'ant"
- some homonyms not mastered, e.g., "their, they're, there"

8. PUNCTUATION AND USE OF CAPITALS

HIGH (5 or 6)
In general, the writer uses capitals and punctuates correctly. Capitals and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable.

MIDDLE (3 OR 4)
Errors in use of capitals and punctuation may be present but do not perceptibly detract from the clarity or readability of the paper.

LOW (1 OR 2)
Errors in use of capitals and punctuation substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	41.5%
Middle	(3-4)	-	52.0%
Low	(0-2)	-	6.5%
Mean	4.17		

Ninety-three point five (93.5%) of the students placed in the middle and high ranges. These results indicate that this area is a strength in the students' writing.

Interpretation

Punctuation and the use of capitals was also high with 94.5% scoring 3 and above out of a possible 6 therefore indicating some transfer of learning from their first language. The most commonly noted error was the incorrect usage of commas. Mistakes in capitals were usually interferences from the first language.

9. SPELLING

HIGH (5 or 6)

Spelling attracts little or no attention. If errors in mature words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the words being used.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)

Few spelling errors appear in the writing, and in general, the errors do not detract from the impact or readability of the paper. Most "guesses" are reasonable.

LOW (1 or 2)

Errors in spelling substantially detract from the readability and impression of the paper. The reader must stop and puzzle over the words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended.

Results

High (5-6) - 60.5%
Middle (3-4) - 34.5%
Low (0-2) - 5.0%
Mean 4.51

Ninety-five percent (95.0%) of the students placed in the middle and high ranges. This indicates a strength in the students' writing.

Interpretation

The performance of the students was high in this area with 95% of them functioning at grade level or above. This is also borne out by the formal spelling test (results are given on page 62). Few spelling errors appeared in the writing and those that did, did not detract from the readability of the papers. Many of them were the result of interference from their first language, e.g., "english", "opignon", "au current".

NARRATIVE WRITING

Many of the comments that were made concerning persuasive writing also apply to narrative writing. However, each area of the analytic scale will be discussed as it applies to this particular task. In this piece of writing the student was asked to tell a story about stepping into a time machine which takes him/her to a time period of his/her choice that he/she must describe.

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE

In narrative writing, the organization or sequence of events should generally follow a temporal (time) sequence. The organization for the paper should effectively introduce the situation in general, lead the reader clearly through the series of events, then effectively come to closure. In brief, the writer should introduce effectively the setting, the characters, and should build from this introduction. The introduction and conclusion should aid the reader in thinking about and understanding the series of events.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The writer has an effective opening that catches the interest of the reader. The organization clearly follows a sequence of events without wandering. Effective transitions from one event to another are used to cue the movement of the paper for the reader. The closing is effective in that it leads the reader to feel that the story is over and has come to an understandable conclusion.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
The writer generally introduces the story, but does not catch the interest of the reader, or the writer begins the writing without providing the reader with the necessary background to the story or explanation. Generally, each of the events is appropriately described, but the writer may not have the movement of events clearly laid out and may not have used effective transitions to aid the reader in following the events. The paper may have a weak ending or may leave the reader with little or no sense of closure.

LOW (1 or 2)
The writer has not attempted to catch the interest of the reader in the opening. Necessary background information may be lacking in the paper. The sequence of events in the paper may be confusing, left out, or ordered so inappropriately that the reader cannot follow the sequence of events. Transition phrases are not used to aid the reader in following the events, and the reader is left with little or no feeling of closure or completeness at the end of the paper. The entire paper may leave the reader confused about what really happened; the reader may be confused about the importance of the events either to the characters described or to the reader.

Results

High (5-6) - 20.9%
Middle (3-4) - 62.3%
Low (0-2) - 16.8% Mean 3.60

Eighty-three point two percent (83.2%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates a satisfactory performance in this area.

Interpretation

In this area, 83.2% of the students performed at the level of expectancy for this grade. The writers in the high range could organize their writing with an introduction, body and conclusion: they could effectively introduce the setting and characters and build from the introduction. In general the students in the middle range had a sense of what makes a good narrative and an effort was made to produce a presentable piece of writing. However, in many cases, transitions were laborious and the movement of events was choppy or incoherent. Many papers had a weak ending leaving the reader with little sense of closure. One wondered if the time element was not a contributing factor as markers had the impression that many writers felt rushed. The writings of the students in the low range lacked in most or all of the qualities that make for a well organized paper.

2. WORDING AND STYLE

Wording refers to the choice of vocabulary the writer makes in the paper. Style refers to the ways in which those words are strung together in phrases, sentences, or longer thought-units. Word choice needs to reflect both precision and maturity, as well as appropriateness to the audience being addressed. The writer should be aware of the level of his/her audience and explain words used in a highly specific or technical manner. The author should also strive for an interesting, engaging style, one that is both easy to read and understand, and interesting and varied in sentence structure and length. Both wording and style need to be direct and clearly understandable.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The words chosen by the writer reflect sensitivity to the audience being addressed. The words are precise and exact, with clear referents. The style is interesting, sentences are varied as to length and structure when appropriate, and the structures are clear and easy to read and understand. The style is engaging, and the words help the reader clearly "see" and understand the series of events.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
The words chosen by the writer may have appropriate referents, but they do not reflect a sensitivity to the reader/audience. The emphasis seems to be on the content, rather than on the communication. When technical or specific words are used, they are not well-explained or defined. The style is repetitive to the point of being noticeable, or inappropriately long or short sentences interfere, at times, with the ease of reading. Though correctly used, vocabulary may be too general for the type of writing.

LOW (1 or 2)
The writer seems to have no sense of audience whatsoever. Words or phrases chosen may not aid the reader in understanding the events and may interfere with comprehension. Sentences are either too long to be read with ease, or too short to create a flow. The words and style seem colourless, non-engaging, or uninteresting.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	18.9%	
Middle	(3-4)	-	63.2%	
Low	(0-2)	-	17.9%	Mean 3.42

Eighty-two point one percent (82.1%) of the students performed in the high and middle ranges. This indicates a satisfactory performance in this area.

Interpretation

Eighty-two point one percent (82.1%) of the students performed in the middle and high ranges indicating a satisfactory performance in this area. Writers in the high range made effective use of dialogue and the presence of many imaginative ideas was noted. The words chosen reflected sensitivity to the audience being addressed and the style was engaging. As for the writers in the middle range, many experienced some difficulties in expressing their thoughts in a style that was engaging and fluid, using a precise and colourful vocabulary. Readers could guess at what the writer was thinking but written sentences failed to clearly convey meaning, suggesting that not enough revision had been done either through lack of time or habit. Writers in the low range had little sense of audience, and their choice of words did not in any way enhance the quality of their papers.

3. FOCUS OR THEME

The writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the purpose of writing. She/he seems to have a central focus and maintains that throughout the piece. There seems to be a theme holding each of the paper's elements together.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The writer clearly has a central focus for the paper and develops each of the elements within the paper so that it directly relates to that central focus. The purpose of the paper is clearly discernible. The writer does not present information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central purpose of the paper. At the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events have been sufficiently covered without undue reference to unimportant or unrelated material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
The writer has a central focus for the paper, but the relationship of each of the elements within the paper is not clearly related to the focus. The purpose of the paper is not always clearly identifiable and, at times, the writer interjects information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central focus. These intrusions, however, do not seriously interfere with the thrust or movement. At the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events have been covered, but that the movement of the paper has been interrupted along the way by unnecessary, incomplete, or unrelated elements.

LOW (1 or 2)
The paper does not seem to have a central focus or thematic movement. Elements within the paper seem unrelated to any central purpose. Information, opinions, and details seem to be added with little concern as to how they relate to the flow of events. At the conclusion, the reader is likely to wonder as to what the main point or purpose of the paper.

Results

High (5-6) - 18.9%
Middle (3-4) - 64.3%
Low (0-2) - 16.8% Mean 3.55

Eighty-three point two percent (83.2%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that the students' performance in this area is satisfactory.

Interpretation

Although 83.2% of the writers performed in the middle and high range, 53.0% of them scored a 4 or above out of a possible 6 in this area (Preliminary Report, p.12). This would indicate that many writers had a central focus for their paper and chose incidents and details because they related to the theme. In the papers of the students in the low range, one would find a collection of events without a theme or plot. Information and details were added with little concern as to how they related to the flow of events.

4. IDEAS

The ideas presented in a paper reflect the quality, uniqueness, and creativity of the thinking involved in the development of the paper. The selection of the topic, the choice of point of view, the selection and shaping of details are all involved in the presentation and development of the ideas.

HIGH (5 or 6)

The writer has selected an interesting, engaging topic, and appropriate and meaningful ideas to discuss and describe, and may have dealt with the topic in a unique, creative fashion. Humour, interesting figures of speech may be used or attempted in relating events. An interesting point of view may have been selected.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)

Though the ideas presented in the paper are generally sound, they do not reflect a unique or creative point of view in dealing with the topic. No attempt has been made to employ humour, interesting figures of speech, comparisons or the like in order to make the paper more interesting or lively.

LOW (1 or 2)

The ideas presented do not reflect sound or creative thinking. Not only is the paper lifeless, but the ideas do not congeal as a whole and seem to reflect mental wandering rather than logical or creative thinking.

Results

High (5-6) - 19.9%
Middle (3-4) - 59.7%
Low (0-2) - 20.4% Mean 3.47

Seventy-nine point six percent (79.6%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This score would indicate a need for improvement.

Interpretation

The results for ideas are higher for the narrative than for the persuasive piece (79.6%, as compared to 76.5%). This could be due in part to the fact that the students were more familiar with this genre of writing. The writers in the high range (19.9%) selected an engaging topic and presented it in a meaningful, creative fashion. In the middle range (59.7%), the ideas presented were sound, but uniqueness and creativity of thinking were lacking and little attempt was made to employ humour or appropriate figures of speech. In the low range, the papers were devoid of creativity or logic.

5. CHOICE OF DETAILS AND ELABORATION OF IDEAS

The details chosen by a writer, how particular ideas within a paper have been elaborated, and how real and vivid the writing is can make the difference between a listless, lifeless paper and an exciting, engaging paper.

HIGH (5 or 6)

The details chosen by the writer are appropriate to the description of the process or the telling of the story and are elaborated in such a manner as to be interesting to the reader without getting carried away. The words, phrases, imagery, figures of speech, etc. seem to have been selected and presented in such a manner as to make the events or description alive, real to the reader, and clear.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)

The details chosen seem appropriate to the description or story but, at times, the writing seems to lack life. The elaboration may not allow the reader to visualize the events adequately and may not be clear to the reader. Though adequately described, the story may lack the life that vivid writing and expression could give it.

LOW (1 or 2)

The details chosen by the writer do not seem appropriate to the purpose of the paper or to his/her audience. The writer has not appropriately elaborated the events and the writing is lifeless. The expression used by the writer not only is not vivid, but also may be boring and unreal.

Results

High (5-6) - 15.3%
Middle (3-4) - 59.7%
Low (0-2) - 25.0% Mean 3.32

Seventy-six percent (76.0%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that this area in the students' writing needs improvement.

Interpretation

Choice of details and elaboration of ideas is another weaker area, with 25% of the students performing in the low range. The high (15.3%) presented papers written in such a manner as to make the descriptions alive and real. In the middle range, of the 59.7% of the students scoring in this range, 30% scored a 3 out of a possible 6 indicating that imagery, figures of speech and descriptive words or phrases were generally absent from many narratives. The details chosen may have been appropriate but the lack of elaboration of these ideas produced papers that were often stilted and unreal. In the low range (25% of the students), it was evident that the papers did not contain the necessary details, nor were the events appropriately elaborated, or priorized to present interesting, coherent narratives.

6. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate.

HIGH (5 or 6)

A positive effect is created by the writer in the use of sentence structures. The writer seems to have control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively in communicating.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)

Although the writer seems to have control of a number of sentence structures, at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy, or the writer may not have taken advantage of opportunities to create a positive effect in varying or repeating sentence structures.

LOW (1 or 2)

The sentence structures are little more than simple sentences; a small number of structures are repeated throughout the paper so that the paper becomes boring or predictable. The writer seems to have serious difficulties in presenting effectively-constructed sentences.

Results

High (5-6) - 18.9%
Middle (3-4) - 58.1%
Low (0-2) - 23.0% Mean 3.37

Seventy-nine percent (79.0%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that this is an area of the students' writing that needs improvement.

Interpretation

In the high range (18.9%), students were able to control a variety of sentence structures and to employ them effectively. In the middle range (58.1%), some students did use a number of sentence structures although at times some of them may have been ambiguous or clumsy. However, it was noted that 34.5% of the students in the middle range scored a 3 out of a possible 6 in this area. These students, along with those in the low range (23%), encountered difficulty in manipulating sentence structures; variety in sentence structure was lacking with many of the sentences being repetitious and of the subject/verb kind. When a complex sentence was attempted, the structure was faulty and many sentences were run-on.

7. USAGE

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference and the like fall into the area of usage.

HIGH (5 or 6)
The usage is correct and appropriate to the level of presentation of the material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Few usage errors appear and they do not detract from the impact of the discourse.

LOW (1 or 2)
Errors detract substantially from the readability and the impression of the paper.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	19.4%	
Middle	(3-4)	-	60.7%	
Low	(0-2)	-	19.9%	
Mean				3.45

Eighty point one percent (80.1%) of the students placed in the middle and high ranges. These results, although appearing as satisfactory on the scale, indicate that this area needs improvement.

Interpretation

The results of usage for narrative writing were considerably lower than for persuasive writing. Only 19.4% of the students placed in the high range as compared with 30.5% for the essay. In attempting to explain this discrepancy between the two scores, the markers felt it may have been caused by any or all of the following: the length of the papers, the time constraint involved in the narrative, or the perceived need to focus on story content rather than on usage. Many of the errors in usage noted in the persuasive papers were also present in the narratives: pronoun, article and preposition usage, placement of adjectives and adverbs, inconsistency in verb tense usage, errors in contractions, homonyms, and spelling of past tense in verbs - e.g., "bursted", "flyed", "outplayeded" and the use of some slang, e.g., "cause for because". Some or many of these errors were found in papers in all ranges of performance.

8. PUNCTUATION AND USE OF CAPITALS

HIGH (5 or 6)
In general, the writer uses capitals and punctuates correctly. Capitals and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Errors in use of capitals and punctuation may be present but do not perceptibly detract from the clarity and readability of the paper.

LOW (1 or 2)
Errors in use of capitals and punctuation substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	37.8%
Middle	(3-4)	-	47.4%
Low	(0-2)	-	14.8%
Mean			3.89

Eighty-five point two percent (85.2%) of the students scored in the middle and high range. These results indicate that student performance in this area was satisfactory.

Interpretation

The scores in this area were satisfactory in that 85.2% of the students placed in the high and middle range. Capitals and punctuation were used effectively to make the writing clear and readable, and errors that did appear did not perceptibly detract from the clarity of the paper. The results were considerably lower in the narrative than in the persuasive writing, but they could be explained by the differing length of the papers or with a lack of time to proofread the stories. Some or many of these errors were found in all ranges of performance.

9. SPELLING

HIGH (5 or 6)
Spelling attracts little or no attention. If errors in mature words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the words being used.

MIDDLE (3 or 4)
Few spelling errors appear in the writing, but in general the errors do not detract from the impact or readability of the paper. Most "guesses" are reasonable.

LOW (1 or 2)
Errors in spelling substantially detract from the readability and impression of the paper. The reader must stop and puzzle over words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended.

Results

High	(5-6)	-	40.8%	
Middle	(3-4)	-	47.0%	
Low	(0-2)	-	12.2%	
Mean				3.97

Eighty-seven point eight percent (87.8%) of the students scored in the middle and high ranges. These results indicate that this area is a strength in the students' writing.

Interpretation

The results in spelling were good, with many of the errors reflecting meaningful "guesses" at the words being used, e.g., "labratory", "discusting", or an interference from the students' first language: "danse" for "dance". The scores, however, were lower for the narratives than for the persuasive writing; 86.0% placed in the middle and high range in the second task as compared to 95% in the first. This was explained by the difference in the tasks, their length, and their organization. It was felt that the writers took more risks with the narratives, and that the time constraint or the habits formed may have influenced the kind of editing done by the students.

Spelling Test

Students were presented with a list of twenty-four words to spell. The words were spoken in isolation, used in a sentence and finally repeated in isolation for the students.

Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly	Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly
1. scientist	92.9%	13. generally	70.6%
2. items	90.4	14. official	80.7
3. companies	87.8	15. eliminate	46.2
4. economy	80.7	16. parliament	28.9
5. describe	80.2	17. necessary	61.4
6. personnel	44.7	18. finally	83.2
7. restaurant	82.7	19. funeral	83.2
8. confusion	92.9	20. wealthy	71.1
9. complain	91.9	21. experiment	75.1
10. temperature	75.6	22. obvious	85.3
11. immigrants	50.8	23. employee	68.0
12. community	77.7	24. deduction	94.9

Mean: 17.97

From this table one notes that the words spelled correctly by most students are words which are spelled the same or nearly the same as in French - "items, confusion, deduction, scientist" (although in some cases this word had an "e" at the ending, denoting an interference). The word "economy" denoted a certain interference being written "economie" in several cases. "Parliament" and "immigrants" were words with low scores evidencing the same phenomenon, "parliament" often being written "parlement" and "immigrants" spelled "emigrants". "Personnel" was often written with only one "n" or confused with the word "personal". "Eliminate" was the word that evidenced the greatest variety of spellings, e.g., "elimenate", "iliminate", "ilemenate," etc. The distribution table on page 22 of the Preliminary Report for Grade 8 Franco-Manitoban Schools indicates that 60.4% of the students obtained a score of 75% or more on their test with 16% of these students spelling all words correctly or having only one error. Twenty-eight point nine percent (28.9%) of the students scored between 50% and 75% and another 10.5% scored below 50%.

Summary

Results from the GIM indicate that in persuasive writing 80% of the students performed in the middle and high range; in narrative writing 87.8% of the students attained the same level of performance. These results indicate that an acceptable percentage of the grade 8 students present a paper in both genres of writing where the quality of thought is appropriate for the grade level. In all aspects of organization and presentation, a good percentage of papers demonstrated performance that was acceptable for a grade 8 "français" student. It was felt that these students had a general awareness of the qualities and attributes particular to the two tasks.

Analytical Scale

Mechanics. The results on punctuation, capitals, and spelling are evidence that these two areas represent strengths in the grade 8 "français" writing. In punctuation and use of capitals the high percentage (93.5% and 85.2%) of students placing in the middle and high range indicate some transfers of learning from their first language, in spite of interferences. This may suggest that many of these interferences have disappeared by this time. Capitals and punctuation were used effectively to make the writing clear and readable. Errors that did appear did not perceptibly detract from the clarity of the paper. However, it was noted that the most common error in punctuation was the incorrect usage of the comma. The results were considerably lower in the story writing than in the persuasive writing, but this could be explained by the differing length of the papers in each genre and a lack of time to proofread the stories.

Spelling. The results in spelling were good with many of the errors reflecting meaningful "guesses" at the words being used, e.g., "labratory, discusting" or an interference from the student's first language; e.g., "danse for dance, opignon for opinion, english for English". The scores, however, were lower for the narratives than they were for persuasive writing; 87.8% placed in the middle and high range in the first task as compared with 95% in the second one. This was explained by the difference in the tasks, their length, and their organization. It was felt that writers took more risks with the narrative, and that the time constraint and/or the habits formed may have influenced the amount of editing done by students. In the spelling test there was also some evidence of transfers of learning in words with identical spelling in both languages (e.g., "item", "confusion", "deduction") which were spelled correctly by over 90% of the students in all cases. Other words such as "parliament" (spelled "parlement") and "immigrant" (spelled "emigrant") denoted interference. Nevertheless, the mean score on 24 words was 17.97 with 60.4% of the students obtaining a score of 75% or more on their test and 16% of these students obtaining a perfect score (24) or having only one error. Twenty-eight point nine percent (28.9%) of the students scored between 50% and 75% and another 10.5% scored below 50%.

It was generally accepted that in both persuasive writing and narrative writing, the mechanics of writing were benefitting from instruction received in both languages, that a good percentage of the students performed well in these areas, and that many of the interferences noted in the earlier grades had disappeared or would eventually.

Usage is one area where quite a discrepancy in scores was apparent; only 19.4% of the students placed in the high range in the narrative as compared with 30.5% for the persuasive papers. The middle range in both tasks was closer (55.5% - 60.7%), as were the lows (14.0% - 19.9%) but always in favor of persuasive writing. In attempting to explain this discrepancy the markers felt this may have been due to any or all of the following reasons: the length of the papers, the time element which placed constraints on the editing, and the genres, where the student was more inclined to focus on story content than on usage in the narrative paper. However, the same type of errors appeared in both papers:

- pronoun usage
    - switching from singular to plural sometimes within the same sentence
    - lack of clarity in pronoun reference
    - misuse of relative pronoun - "that", "who", "which"
- inconsistency in verb tense usage, i.e., going from present to past and back again in the same paragraph
- misplaced adjectives and adverbs
- misuse of prepositions - from, to, at, into, in, on, e.g., "We arrived to Phoenix, we went in the desert."
- an overuse of the article "the", e.g., "Why should there be a 9 o'clock curfew for the grade 8 students?"
- misplaced (or lack of) apostrophe in contractions, e.g., "dont", "d'ont", "c'ant"
- homonyms not mastered, e.g., "their", "they're", "there, etc."

Nevertheless, in spite of these errors, which were not present in all papers, 86% of students performed at an appropriate (or higher) level for their grade in persuasive writing, and 80.1% did the same in narrative writing.

Focus. In both tasks an acceptable percentage of the students (82.5% and 83.2%) appeared to have a good grasp of focus. In the persuasive paper, the writers in these levels managed to convince the reader of the validity of their argument by presenting a theme holding each of the paper's elements together. Each element was developed so that it directly related to the topic. In some of the papers scoring in the middle range and in most of those in the low range, information, details, and opinions unrelated to the topic had been added. In the narrative, many writers had a central focus for their paper and chose events and details because they related to the topic.

Wording and style. Scores in this area for both tasks were very similar. Two out of 3 students performed in the middle range with 20% of the writers experiencing difficulty in choosing words and phrases suitable to the purpose of the paper or in expressing their thoughts in an engaging, fluid style using precise and colourful vocabulary. Many of the sentences lacked clarity, suggesting that not enough revision had been done either because of time constraint or lack of habit. In some papers emphasis was on content rather than communication. However, many papers reflected a sensitivity to the audience being addressed, displayed innovative styles in their presentations (e.g., letter, editorial) and made effective use of dialogue.

Sentence Structure. While sentence structure caused few problems for one out of four students who performed in the high range (25%, 18.9%) in both tasks, it did not prove to be as easy for the 24.0% (in both persuasive and narrative writing) who scored in the low range. It was also noted that out of those who performed in the middle range (51.0% - 58.1%), more than half scored a 3 out of a possible 6. It was obvious that many lacked the ability to control a variety of sentence structures and use them effectively in communicating: many sentences were repetitious and of the subject/verb kind. When a complex sentence was attempted, it was often ambiguous or clumsy, or tended to be a run-on sentence.

Organization and Sequence. For persuasive writing, 3 out of 4 students placed either in the middle or high range (16.0% for high - 60.5% for middle) in organization and sequence, while the scores were slightly better for narrative (20.9% - 62.2%). In general these students had a sense of what is involved in presentation in both papers. The papers were organized with an introduction, body, and conclusion. The setting and characters were effectively introduced, and the organization followed a logical sequence with a good ending. However, the students in the low range (16.8% - 23.5%) encountered difficulties in logical and sequential presentation of points and in categorization of related arguments in the same paragraph. In many papers. transitions were laborious, the movements of events was choppy or incoherent, and the conclusion was weak.

Ideas. The area of ideas was one of the weaker ones for these students with 23.5% (persuasive) and 20.4% (narrative) performing in the low range. In the persuasive writing, the ideas were generally sound but they did not, in many cases, reflect a unique or creative point of view. The narratives lacked humour or appropriate figures of speech. It was felt that this attribute could be greatly enhanced by a greater number and variety of pre-writing exercises.

Choice of Details and Elaboration of Ideas. This characteristic is directly related to the foregoing one and the same weakness is evident in both tasks (26.0% - 25.0% in the low range). Difficulties in sequential and logical presentation were apparent in the persuasive writing. Often there was an inadequacy of substantial and meaningful information to support a point. In the narratives imagery and figures of speech were generally absent and although the details chosen were appropriate, the lack of elaboration of these ideas produced writings that were stilted and lifeless. Inadequacies in collection of details and ideas and in the elaboration of these ideas may be a reflection of shortcomings in pre-writing activities. Revision activities (especially group and peer) of different kinds would also help in the selection of relevant details and in the clarity of their elaboration.

Overview

To sum up, GIM results show that an acceptable percentage of the grade 8 "français" students can write a paper, either persuasive or narrative, where the quality of thought and effectiveness of overall organization and presentation is appropriate for the grade 8 level or better.

The analytical scale shows definite strengths in spelling, punctuation and capitals, which indicates that some transfer of learning occurs from one language to another in spite of some interferences noted.

The areas focus or theme, wording and style, and usage were judged to be acceptable. Students seemed to be progressing in a fairly normal fashion at this developmental stage of their English Language Arts program, in spite of a number of interferences in usage, and a need to develop their descriptive vocabulary.

Areas which need to be strengthened are those of sentence structure, organization and sequence, ideas and elaboration of details. These aspects of writing will most benefit from classroom strategies that foster the development of ideas and vocabulary, and promote organization and sentence variety. There will be an advantage to those students in classrooms where process writing has been implemented in both languages.

CHAPTER 5

Grade 11 Results

The grade 11 test consisted of two writing tasks and a short spelling test.

PART I - Process Writing
PART II - Essay Writing
PART III - A spelling test of 20 words

PART I: The Process Writing assignment required students to write a lively, knowledgeable piece explaining how something is done or organized.

Students were given 45 minutes in which to prepare a rough draft and to rewrite the final copy.

PART II: In the Essay Writing task students were asked to write an essay, two to four pages long, following their reading of an article on parent-child relationships.

In the essay the student had to present a personal view as to what the nature of the relationship should be between a sixteen-year-old and his or her family.

Two sessions were allotted to this task. The first session of 45 minutes allowed students to read and discuss the article in small groups and prepare a first draft. In the second session they were given 50 minutes to revise, edit, and write their final drafts.

PART III: The spelling test of twenty (20) words was an assessment of students' ability to spell grade-level words.

ANGLAIS 200

PROCESS WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	8.3%	67.9%	23.8%	7.13
1. Organization and Sequence	17.9	66.0	16.1	3.58
2. Wording and Style	16.1	70.2	13.7	3.39
3. Focus or Theme	12.5	65.5	22.0	3.65
4. Ideas	19.0	71.5	9.5	3.26
5. Detail/Elaboration	25.0	67.3	7.7	3.16
6. Sentence Structure	15.5	72.0	12.5	3.37
7. Usage	20.2	66.1	13.7	3.29
8. Punctuation/Capitals	6.5	62.4	32.1	3.99
9. Spelling	10.1	54.2	35.7	3.90

ESSAY WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	5.9%	70.6%	23.5%	7.18
1. Organization and Sequence	19.4	68.8	11.8	3.34
2. Wording and Style	14.1	71.8	14.1	3.43
3. Focus or Theme	18.2	70.6	11.1	3.38
4. Ideas	15.3	71.8	12.9	3.40
5. Detail/Elaboration	16.5	72.3	11.2	3.36
6. Sentence Structure	17.1	63.5	19.4	3.50
7. Usage	23.5	54.7	21.8	3.47
8. Punctuation/Capitals	5.9	51.2	42.9	4.15
9. Spelling	10.6	46.5	42.9	4.08

NOTE: The number of students tested in Anglais 200 was 172.

ANGLAIS 201

PROCESS WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	35.7%	60.6%	3.6%	5.29
1. Organization and Sequence	25.0	57.2	17.9	3.25
2. Wording and Style	28.6	67.8	3.6	2.89
3. Focus or Theme	10.7	82.2	7.1	3.39
4. Ideas	25.0	71.4	3.6	2.86
5. Detail/Elaboration	35.7	64.3	0.0	2.68
6. Sentence Structure	39.3	57.2	3.6	2.79
7. Usage	32.1	64.3	3.6	2.93
8. Punctuation/Capitals	10.7	67.9	21.5	3.79
9. Spelling	25.0	53.5	21.4	3.50

ESSAY WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	35.7%	60.7%	3.6%	5.14
1. Organization and Sequence	67.9	28.6	3.6	2.18
2. Wording and Style	42.9	53.6	3.6	2.68
3. Focus or Theme	60.7	32.2	7.1	2.25
4. Ideas	50.0	50.0	0.0	2.57
5. Detail/Elaboration	46.5	50.0	3.6	2.54
6. Sentence Structure	53.6	42.9	3.6	2.57
7. Usage	39.3	53.6	7.1	2.71
8. Punctuation/Capitals	17.9	67.9	14.3	3.29
9. Spelling	28.5	50.0	21.4	3.04

NOTE: The number of students tested in Anglais 201 was 28.

ANGLAIS 200 & 201 COMBINED

PROCESS WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	12.2%	66.9%	21.0%	6.75
1. Organization and Sequence	18.9	64.8	16.3	3.45
2. Wording and Style	17.9	69.9	12.2	3.31
3. Focus or Theme	12.2	67.9	19.9	3.61
4. Ideas	19.9	71.4	8.9	3.21
5. Detail/Elaboration	26.5	66.9	6.6	3.09
6. Sentence Structure	18.9	69.9	11.2	3.28
7. Usage	21.9	65.9	12.2	3.23
8. Punctuation/Capitals	7.1	62.3	30.6	3.96
9. Spelling	12.2	54.1	33.7	3.84

ESSAY WRITING

	LOW	MIDDLE	HIGH	MEAN
GIM	9.6%	69.6%	20.8%	6.89
1. Organization and Sequence	25.9	63.4	10.7	3.19
2. Wording and Style	17.8	69.5	12.7	3.34
3. Focus or Theme	23.9	65.4	10.7	3.24
4. Ideas	19.8	69.0	11.2	3.30
5. Detail/Elaboration	20.3	69.5	10.2	3.26
6. Sentence Structure	21.8	61.1	17.3	3.39
7. Usage	25.4	54.8	19.8	3.39
8. Punctuation/Capitals	7.1	53.8	39.1	4.05
9. Spelling	12.7	47.2	40.1	4.00

NOTE: The combined sample totalled 200 students.

The 1988 Grade 11 Writing Assessment test was administered throughout the province during the two weeks of May, 1988. Students enrolled in the Anglais 200 and Anglais 201 in Franco-Manitoban schools were tested. The returned samples totalled 200. Of this number 172 were enrolled in Anglais 200 and 28 in Anglais 201.

Two tasks were proposed to the students. The first was a piece of process writing, whose purpose was to explain a procedure, i.e., how to do something. The second was an opinion essay written whose purpose was to persuade the audience of the validity of an adopted point of view.

General Impression Marking

General Impression Marking is a judgement about the overall quality of a student's writing given the purpose of the writing and the audience to which it is addressed.

The GIM scale attempts to rate compositions in a general, global manner. Areas covered include the quality of thought evident in the paper, the effectiveness of the overall organization, the effectiveness of the overall presentation, and the effectiveness of style and word choice.

Both tasks, process writing and essay writing were rated twice on a scale of 0-6 by two different markers. The two scores were then combined for a score on 12.

Samples scoring in the high range showed evidence of the following qualities:

HIGH (5 or 6): The paper has evidence of sound thinking on the part of the writer. The quality of thought reflects a mature point of view. The organization of the paper indicates careful planning and thinking on the part of the writer, and the paper is presented in an effective, meaningful fashion. The style is appropriate to the level of thought and organization of the paper, and the word choice and use reflect a mature, sophisticated grasp of language and language use. The level of the paper is appropriate for the audience being addressed (in this case, a student's classmates) and fulfills the identified purpose.

Results	Combined results of	Results	
	200 & 201	200	201
Process Writing	21.0%	23.8%	3.6%
Essay Writing	20.8%	23.5%	3.6%

Samples revealing the following characteristics scored in the middle range:

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The thinking of the writer seems appropriate to the grade level of the student but reflects a level of maturity less than adult-like. The organization of the paper is generally appropriate, though the writer might have been more careful in planning and carrying out an organizational pattern. The thinking is meaningful, but at times the paper may wander from the central thrust or movement. The style, though generally appropriate to the level of thought and organization of the paper, may reflect some inconsistencies or repetitions to the point of being distracting. Word choice reflects the level and maturity of the student but may not always be appropriate to the audience to which the paper is addressed. In general, the paper achieves its identified purpose, but it may wander or not take advantage of obvious opportunities in achieving that purpose.

Results	Combined results of	Results	
	200 & 201	200	201
Process Writing	66.9%	67.9%	60.6%
Essay Writing	69.6%	70.6%	60.6%

Samples scoring in the low range denoted the following characteristics:

LOW (1 or 2): The thinking that is evident in the paper seems inconsistent and immature, reflecting an identifiably egocentric point of view. The organization of the paper is difficult to follow and does not reflect any careful planning or any meaningful organizational pattern. The thrust or movement of the paper is interrupted by wandering discourse, unnecessary asides, or inappropriate information. The style is inconsistent and immature, and repetitive or uninteresting structures are consistently used. Word choice is inappropriate, distracting, and shallow. The writer seems to have little consideration for the audience or reader and does not consistently address himself/herself to the identified purpose of the paper.

Results

	Combined results of	Results	
	200 & 201	200	201
Process Writing	12.2%	8.3%	35.7%
Essay Writing	9.6%	5.9%	35.7%

Mean

	200 & 201	200	201
Process Writing	6.75	7.13	5.29
Essay Writing	6.89	7.18	5.14

It was felt that these results generally reflected the expected performance of the identified population when 200's and 201's are combined, with 1 out of 5 performing at the high level and two-thirds of the students in the middle range. When results for both groups are given separately, figures indicate that a good majority of students from both groups place in the middle range. The writing of these students is less identifiable as belonging to a specific group. A small margin of high 200's and low 201's is recognizable.

Analytical Scale

In the following pages, each area of the analytical scale will be analyzed separately. The criteria for judging the different skills are the same for both tasks, process writing and essay writing, except for the area of organization and sequence. Therefore, all areas will be given one interpretation, whereas organization and sequence will receive two, one for each task.

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE (for process writing)

In process writing, the organization or sequence should generally follow the steps of the process itself, usually in a temporal (time) sequence. The organization for the paper should introduce the process, lead the reader clearly through the steps of the process, then effectively come to closure.

HIGH (5 or 6): The writer has an effective opening that catches the interest of the reader. The organization closely and clearly follows the steps in the process. If sub-processes are explained, the writer has cued the reader to these sub-areas and has clearly identified the steps of each. Effective transitions from one step to another are used. The closing is effective in that it leads the reader to feel that the process is complete and has usually some general information about the process as a whole or its importance.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The writer generally introduces the process but does not catch the interest of the reader, or she/he begins the description of the process without an introduction. Generally, all of the steps of the process are present and in the appropriate order, but the writer may not have the steps clearly laid out or may not employ transitions that aid the reader in following the process. The paper may have a weak ending or may leave the reader with little or no sense of closure.

LOW (1 or 2): The writer has not attempted to catch the interest of the reader in his/her opening. The steps of the process are confused or ordered so inappropriately that the reader cannot follow the process. Transition phrases are not used to aid the reader in effectively following the steps, and the reader is left with little or no feeling of closure or completeness at the end of the paper. The entire paper may leave the reader confused about the process itself or of its importance.

Results

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	16.1%	17.9%	16.3%
Middle	66.0%	57.2%	64.8%
Low	17.9%	25.0%	18.9%
Mean	3.58	3.25	3.45

Eighty-two point one percent (82.1%) of the 200 students and 75.1% of the 201 students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that the 200 students' performance in this area is satisfactory. The 201 students' performance needs improvement.

Interpretation

The students in the high range (16.1% (200) - 17.9% (201)) showed competent organization in process writing. The writers had an effective opening that caught the interest of the reader; transitions were present, and the closing led one to feel that the process was complete. In the middle range (66.0% (200) - 57.2% (201)) all the steps of the process were generally in order, but many students tended to write a series of one- or two-line paragraphs with little concept of topic sentence and with an ineffective use or an absence of transition phrases. The students in the low range (17.9% (200) - 25.0% (201)) presented papers devoid of the qualities that make for a well-organized presentation.

ESSAY WRITING

1. ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCE (for personal opinion essay)

In personal opinion writing, the organization should follow a logical, usually causal, sequence. The essay should indicate that the topic has been effectively introduced, the major points should follow one another logically, and the paper should come to an effective close or conclusion. Organization and sequence is probably most evident in the major topics and in the concluding paragraph.

HIGH (5 or 6): The writer has written an effective opening that will catch the interest of the reader. The organization follows a logical sequence. The closing is effective in that it leads the reader to feel that the paper is complete and brings the essay to a conclusion.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The writer generally introduces the subject but does nothing to catch the interest of the reader. Although all the points presented may be valid or logical arguments, they do not seem ordered in the most effective manner. The paper may have a weak ending or may leave the reader with little or no sense of closure.

LOW (1 or 2): The essay does not reflect an effective opening and the major points in the paper are not logical or valid. The sequence of major topics does not seem to follow any logical pattern. The conclusion leaves the reader with little or no sense of closure. The entire essay leaves the reader confused about the arguments or their importance.

Results

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	11.8%	3.6%	10.7%
Middle	68.8%	28.6%	63.4%
Low	19.4%	67.9%	25.9%
Mean	3.34	2.18	3.19

Eighty point six percent (80.6%) of the 200 students and 32.2% of the 201 students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates that the 200 students' performance in this area is satisfactory. The 201 students' performance needs improvement.

Interpretation

The students in the high range (11.8% (200) and 3.6% (201)) presented essays that followed a logical sequence. Both the opening and the closing of the paper were effective. For the students in the middle range (68.8% (200) and 28.6% (201)), essays denoted several weaknesses. Many papers failed to introduce the central idea or thesis in a clear opening paragraph that caught the interest of the reader and set the direction for the essay.

Deficiencies were noted in topic sentences and transition phrases. In many cases conclusions were, generally, little more than one-line paragraphs which left the reader confused as to the importance of the arguments presented. Another weakness noted quite frequently was the absence of a line of logic being developed by the writers. Coherence may have been present in a cluster of two or three sentences but this inter-connectedness did not extend from paragraph to paragraph or from one section of the paper to another. The essays written by the students in the low range (19.4% (200) and 67.9% (201)) showed very little or no evidence of the qualities that make for a well laid-out essay. In general, results for organization and sequence were better for process writing than for essay writing, probably because this type of writing lends itself better to sequential organization.

2. WORDING AND STYLE (for process writing and personal opinion essay)

Wording refers to the choice of vocabulary the writer makes in the paper. Style refers to the ways in which those words are strung together in phrases, sentences, or longer thought-units. Word choice needs to reflect both precision and maturity, as well as appropriateness to the audience being addressed. The writer should be aware of the level of his/her audience and explain words used in a highly specific or technical manner. The writer should also strive for an interesting, engaging style, one that is both easy to read and understand, and interesting and varied in sentence structure and sentence length. Both wording and style need to be direct and clearly understandable.

HIGH (5 or 6): The words chosen by the writer reflect sensitivity to the audience being addressed. The words are precise and exact, with clear reference. The style is interesting, sentences are varied as to length and structure when appropriate, and the structures are clear and easy to read and understand. The style is engaging, and the words help the reader clearly "see" and understand the process or series of events.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The words chosen by the writer may have appropriate referents, but they do not reflect a sensitivity to the reader/ audience. The emphasis seems to be on the content, rather than on the communication. When technical or specific words are used, they are not well explained or defined. The style is repetitive to the point of being noticeable, or inappropriately long or short sentences interfere with the ease of reading. Though correctly used, vocabulary may be too general for the type of writing.

LOW (1 or 2): The writer seems to have no sense of audience whatsoever. Words or phrases chosen may not aid the reader in understanding the process or events and may interfere with comprehension. Sentences are either too long to be read with ease, or too short to create a flow. The words and style seem colourless, non-engaging, uninteresting.

Results - Process Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	13.7%	3.6%	12.2%
Middle	70.2%	67.8%	69.9%
Low	16.1%	28.6%	17.9%
Mean	3.39	2.89	3.31

Results - Essay Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	14.1%	3.6%	12.7%
Middle	71.8%	53.6%	69.5%
Low	14.1%	42.9%	17.8%
Mean	3.43	2.68	3.34

For process writing, 83.9% of the 200 students and for essay writing, 85.9% of the 200 students scored in the middle and high ranges. This indicates satisfactory student performance in this area.

For process writing, 71.5% of the 201 students and for essay writing, 57.2% of these students scored in the middle and high ranges. This is an area in these students' writing which needs to be improved.

Interpretation

For the students scoring in the high range (13.7-14.1% (200) and 3.6-3.6% (201)) the words chosen for their writing were precise, exact, and reflected sensitivity to the audience being addressed. The style was engaging, length and structure of sentences were varied, and the paper was easy to read and understand. In the middle range (71.8%-70.2% (200) and 67.8%-53.6% (201)). Some students had many ideas on the topic but not sufficient language skills to express them in a lively fashion. Thoughts were written sometimes in awkward sentence forms, indicating a need to improve students' awareness of precise syntax. In the low range, words and phrases chosen seemed colourless, uninteresting, or too general or ambiguous. Many writers had not internalized a sense of audience and their papers did not reveal a sensitivity to the reader. The results indicate that 201 students favored process writing as they performed better on this task than on the essay writing task.

3. FOCUS OR THEME (process writing and essay writing)

The writer chooses aspects, incidents, and details because they relate to the purpose of the writing. She/he seems to have a central focus and maintains it throughout the piece. There seems to be a theme holding each of the paper's elements together.

HIGH (5 OR 6): The writer clearly has a central focus for the paper and develops each of the elements within the paper so that it directly relates to that central focus. The purpose of the paper is clearly discernible. The writer does not present information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central purpose of the paper. At the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events or process has been sufficiently covered without undue reference to unimportant or unrelated material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The writer has a central focus for the paper, but the relationship of each of the elements within the paper is not clearly related to the focus. The purpose of the paper is not always clearly identifiable and, at times, the writer interjects information, opinions, or details that do not relate to the central focus. These intrusions, however, do not seriously interfere with the thrust or movement. At the conclusion, the reader feels as if the events or process have been covered, but that the movement of the paper has been interrupted along the way by unnecessary, incomplete, or unrelated elements.

LOW (1 or 2): The paper does not seem to have a central focus or thematic movement. Elements within the paper seem unrelated to any central purpose. Information, opinions, and details seem to be added with little concern as to how they relate to the description of the process or the flow of events. At the conclusion, the reader is likely to wonder what the main point or purpose of the essay was.

Results - Process Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	22.0%	7.1%	19.9%
Middle	65.5%	82.2%	67.9%
Low	12.5%	10.7%	12.2%
Mean	3.65	3.39	3.61

Results - Essay Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	11.2%	7.1%	10.7%
Middle	70.6%	32.2%	65.4%
Low	18.2%	60.7%	23.9%
Mean	3.38	2.25	3.24

In process writing, 87.5% of the 200 students scored in the high and middle range. This indicates a strength in these students' writing. In essay writing, 81.8% scored in the same ranges, indicating satisfactory performance in this area. For the 201 students, focus and theme in process writing was a strength with 89.3% of the papers scoring in the high and middle ranges. The essay writing results in this area indicate that there is a need for improvement with only 39.3% performing in the high and middle ranges.

Interpretation

The results for focus and theme indicate that generally writers were better able to stay on task for process writing than for essay writing. For the students performing in the high range, the focus of the paper (for each genre) was clearly discernible, and all details, information, and opinions related to the central purpose of the paper. For the papers scoring in the middle range, in many cases, the direction established in the introduction was forgotten during the development of the writing. The assigned task in the essay was to write an opinion essay in order to persuade the audience of the validity of an adopted viewpoint. Many writers, having set themselves up well in the first paragraph, by the middle of the essay, lost sight of their direction and strayed off the topic. This became even more obvious when there was no title. In many case, the writing became a narrative piece, as students described personal experiences which took up too much of their essay and strayed from the purpose and spoiled the structure.

4. IDEAS (for process writing and essay writing)

The ideas presented in a paper reflect the quality, uniqueness, and creativity of the thinking involved in the development of the paper. The selection of the topic, the choice of point of view, the selection and shaping of details are all involved in the presentation and development of the ideas.

HIGH (5 or 6): The writer has selected an interesting, engaging topic, has selected appropriate and meaningful ideas to discuss and describe, and may have dealt with the topic in a unique, creative fashion. Humour, interesting figures of speech, or the like may be used or attempted in describing the process or relating events. An interesting point of view may have been selected.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): Though the ideas presented in the paper are generally sound, they do not reflect a unique or creative point of view in dealing with the topic. No attempt has been made to employ humour, interesting figures of speech, comparisons, or the like in order to make the paper more interesting or lively.

LOW (1 or 2): The ideas presented do not reflect sound or creative thinking. Not only is the paper lifeless, but the ideas do not congeal as a whole and seem to reflect mental wandering rather than logical or creative thinking.

Results - Process Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	9.5%	3.6%	8.7%
Middle	71.5%	71.4%	71.4%
Low	19.0%	25.0%	19.9%
Mean	3.26	2.86	3.21

Results - Essay Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	12.9%	0.0%	11.2%
Middle	71.8%	50.0%	69.0%
Low	15.3%	50.0%	19.8%
Mean	3.40	2.57	3.30

Eighty-one percent (81.0%) of the 200 students performed in the high/middle ranges for ideas in process writing. Eighty-four point seven percent (84.7%) performed in the same ranges in essay writing. This indicates satisfactory performance for these students on both tasks. Seventy-five percent (75.0%) of the 201 students scored in the middle/high ranges for ideas in process writing, and 50.0% scored in the same ranges in essay writing. This would indicate a need for improvement in this area.

Interpretation

The students performing in the high range selected an engaging topic and developed it in a unique, creative fashion. Process writing seemed to generate a greater variety of responses which appeared to be more interesting, while several pieces contained humour thus bringing occasional comic relief.

It was generally felt that the two writing tasks did not provide scope for students' creativity or originality. For the papers in the middle range, the essay topic produced surprisingly conventional content. Many students adopted an essentially egocentric point of view, preferring the safe-route to risk-taking, and presenting the acceptable or obvious in cliché form.

5. CHOICE OF DETAILS AND ELABORATION OF IDEAS (for process writing and essay writing)

The details chosen by a writer, how particular ideas within a paper have been elaborated, and how real and vivid the writing is can make the difference between a listless, lifeless paper and an exciting, engaging paper.

HIGH (5 or 6): The details chosen by the writer are appropriate to the description of the process or the telling of the story and are elaborated in such a manner as to be interesting to the reader without getting carried away. The words, phrases, imagery, figures of speech, etc. seem to have been selected and presented in such a manner as to make the process, events, or description alive, real to the reader, and clear.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): The details chosen seem appropriate to the description or story but, at times, the writing seems to lack life. The elaboration may not allow the reader to visualize the process or events adequately and may not be clear to the reader. Though adequately described, the process or story may lack the life that vivid writing and expression could give it.

LOW (1 or 2): The details chosen by the writer do not seem appropriate to the purpose of the paper or to his/her audience. The writer has not appropriately elaborated the process or events and the writing is lifeless. The expression used by the writer not only is not vivid, but also may be boring and unreal.

Results - Process Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	7.7%	0.0%	6.6%
Middle	67.3%	64.3%	66.9%
Low	25.0%	35.7%	26.5%
Mean	3.16	2.68	3.09

Results - Essay Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	11.2%	3.6%	10.2%
Middle	72.3%	50.0%	69.5%
Low	16.5%	46.5%	20.3%
Mean	3.36	2.54	3.26

Seventy-five percent (75.0%) of the 200 students scored in the middle/high ranges in this area for process writing indicating a need for improvement in choice of details and elaboration of ideas. A satisfactory score was obtained in essay writing with 83.5% scoring in the middle/high ranges. This area is one that needs to be improved by the 201 students, with the score being 64.3% (process writing) and 53.6% (essay writing), for the high/middle ranges.

Interpretation

Students in the high range chose details that were appropriate to the description; words, phrases, imagery, figures of speech were presented and used to convey ideas that gave life to the writing. For those papers in the middle range, content in both pieces tended to be too general. Little use was made of details or explanations and, as a result, the writings were dull and mediocre.

Some inconsistency was noted. Although ideas and elaboration of these are closely related, certain students whose ideas rated a 2 out of a possible 6 developed these ideas with considerable thoroughness, while others with unusual and original ideas neglected to develop them to their potential.

6. SENTENCE STRUCTURE (for process writing and essay writing)

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate.

HIGH (5 or 6): A positive effect is created by the writer in the use of sentence structures. The writer seems to have control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively in communicating.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): Although the writer seems to have control of a number of sentence structures, at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy, or the writer may not have taken advantage of opportunities to create a positive effect in varying or repeating sentence structures.

LOW (1 or 2): The sentence structures are little more than simple sentences; a small number of structures are repeated throughout the paper so that the paper becomes boring or predictable. The writer seems to have serious difficulties in presenting effectively constructed sentences.

Results - Process Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	12.5%	3.6%	11.2%
Middle	72.0%	57.2%	69.9%
Low	15.5%	39.3%	18.9%
Mean	3.37	2.79	3.28

Results - Essay Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	19.4%	3.6%	17.3%
Middle	63.5%	42.9%	61.1%
Low	17.1%	53.6%	21.8%
Mean	3.50	2.57	3.39

Eighty-four point five percent (84.5%) (process writing) and 83.9% (essay writing) of the 200 students performed in the high/middle ranges in sentence structure for both pieces of writing. This indicates satisfactory performance on the part of these students in this area.

The students in the 201 group scored 60.8% (process writing) and 46.5% (essay writing) in this area. This indicates a need for improvement in sentence structure.

Interpretation

The results on this item indicate that for the 200 group, nearly one out of five students (19.1%) score in the high range and are able to manipulate a variety of sentence structures and use them effectively in essay writing. The percentage is somewhat lower in process writing (12.2%). Three point six percent (3.6%) of the 201 group obtained the same performance. It was noted that for those performing at the lower levels, too many simple sentences were present with the compound/complex type appearing infrequently. Furthermore, run-on sentences or sentence fragments were common.

7. USAGE (for process writing and essay writing)

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, subject, verb agreement, pronoun reference and the like fall into the area of usage.

HIGH (5 or 6): The usage is correct and appropriate to the level of presentation of the material.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): Few usage errors appear and they do not detract from the impact of the discourse.

LOW (1 or 2): Errors detract substantially from the readability and the impression of the paper.

Results - Process Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	13.7%	3.6%	12.2%
Middle	66.1%	64.3%	65.9%
Low	20.2%	32.1%	21.9%
Mean	3.29	2.93	3.23

Results - Essay Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	21.8%	7.1%	19.8%
Middle	54.7%	53.6%	54.8%
Low	23.5%	39.3%	25.4%
Mean	3.47	2.71	3.39

Seventy-nine point eight percent (79.8%) (process writing) and 76.5% (essay writing) of the 200 students performed in the middle/high ranges for usage. This indicates a need for improvement in this area. Sixty-seven point nine percent (67.9%) (process writing) and 60.7% (essay writing) of the 201 students performed in the middle/high range. This indicates a need for improvement in usage for these students.

Interpretation

As noted above, the results indicate that this is an area that needs improvement in the students' writing. Even in some well-organized, focused pieces, the following errors were present:

- incorrect use of future, future perfect tenses, past tenses
- faulty pronoun reference
- misuse of apostrophe in possessives
- lack of objectivity in writing through the use of "you".
- misuse of prepositions
- incorrect use of idiomatic phrases.

8. PUNCTUATION AND USE OF CAPITALS (for process writing and essay writing)

HIGH (5 or 6): In general, the writer uses capitals and punctuates correctly. Capitals and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): Errors in use of capitals and punctuation may be present but do not perceptibly detract from the clarity or readability of the paper.

LOW (1 or 2): Errors in use of capitals and punctuation substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper.

Results - Process Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	32.1%	21.5%	30.6%
Middle	62.4%	67.9%	62.3%
Low	6.5%	10.7%	7.1%
Mean	3.99	3.79	3.96

Results - Essay Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	42.9%	14.3%	39.1%
Middle	51.2%	67.9%	53.8%
Low	5.9%	17.9%	7.1%
Mean	4.15	3.29	4.05

Ninety-four point five percent (94.5%) (process writing) and 94.1% (essay writing) of the 200 students scored in the middle/high range for this area. This indicates that the area of punctuation and capitals is a definite strength in the students' writing. Eighty-nine point four percent (89.4%) (process writing) and 82.2% (essay writing) of the 201 students scored in the middle/high ranges for this area. Punctuation/capitals appears as a strength for these students in process writing. The students evidence satisfactory performance in essay writing.

Interpretation

This is an area where both groups (200 - 201) showed a definite strength in both pieces of writing. It was noted that the use of colons and semi-colons was generally poor or in many instances non-existent. Comma faults were also present although not as common. There was very little opportunity to use capitals in titles or question marks in dialogue. It was suggested that a task specifically set up to test these skills might be useful from the research point of view.

9. SPELLING (for process writing and essay writing)

HIGH (5 or 6): Spelling attracts little or no attention. If errors in mature words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the words being used.

MIDDLE (3 or 4): Few spelling errors appear in the writing, but in general the errors do not detract from the impact or readability of the paper. Most "guesses" are reasonable.

LOW (1 or 2): Errors in spelling substantially detract from the readability and impression of the paper. The reader must stop and puzzle over words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended.

Results - Process Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	35.7%	21.4%	33.7%
Middle	54.2%	53.5%	54.1%
Low	10.1%	25.0%	12.1%
Mean	3.90	3.50	3.84

Results - Essay Writing

	Results		Combined results of
	200	201	200 + 201
High	42.9%	21.4%	40.1%
Middle	46.5%	46.0%	47.2%
Low	10.6%	11.6%	12.7%
Mean	4.08	4.03	4.00

Ninety point nine percent (90.9%) (process writing) and 89.4% (essay writing) of the 200 students performed in the high/middle ranges. This indicates that spelling is a strength in these students' writing. Seventy-four point nine percent (74.9%) (process writing) and 67.4% (essay writing) in spelling for the middle/high ranges for the 201 group, indicates that this is an area in the students' writing that needs improvement.

Interpretation

The students in the 200 group performed well in spelling with 90.9% and 89.4% of the students scoring in the high/middle range on both tasks. The 201 students scored slightly better in spelling in the process writing (74.9% in high/middle) as opposed to 67.4% in the essays. Some common errors noted were: "recieve", "responsability", "alot". Other words such as "alcool", "specifique", "individuel", "essentiel", denote an interference from the French language.

Spelling Results

Students were presented with a list of twenty words to spell. The words were spoken in isolation, used in a sentence, and finally repeated in isolation for the students.

Anglais 200 & 201 Combined

Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly	Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly
1. tongue	92.8%	11. development	62.1%
2. library	93.3	12. restaurant	93.3
3. quotation	95.9	13. ineligible	33.3
4. environment	77.9	14. misspell	60.0
5. thoughtful	86.7	15. complaints	92.8
6. occurred	12.8	16. mosquito	74.9
7. insincerely	67.2	17. basically	72.3
8. remembrance	55.4	18. grudge	87.7
9. facilitate	85.6	19. prejudicious	56.9
10. diagnostic	82.1	20. parliament	36.4

Mean 14.19

Anglais 200

Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly	Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly
1. tongue	93.5%	11. development	59.5%
2. library	94.0	12. restaurant	94.6
3. quotation	96.4	13. ineligible	35.1
4. environment	75.6	14. misspell	58.9
5. thoughtful	86.9	15. complaints	94.0
6. occurred	13.1	16. mosquito	77.4
7. insincerely	66.7	17. basically	72.6
8. remembrance	54.8	18. grudge	89.3
9. facilitate	88.7	19. prejudicious	58.9
10. diagnostic	84.5	20. parliament	37.5

Mean 14.32

Anglais 201

Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly	Word	Percentage of students spelling word correctly
1. tongue	92.8%	11. development	75.0%
2. library	93.3	12. restaurant	82.1
3. quotation	95.9	13. ineligible	21.4
4. environment	89.3	14. misspell	64.3
5. thoughtful	82.1	15. complaints	82.1
6. occurred	10.7	16. mosquito	57.1
7. insincerely	67.9	17. basically	67.9
8. remembrance	57.1	18. grudge	75.0
9. facilitate	64.3	19. prejudicious	42.9
10. diagnostic	64.3	20. parliament	28.6

Mean

On examining the samples, one notes no definite trend in the most common errors save for the following exceptions: the word "occurred" was spelled with one "r" in a great number of cases, the word "development" denoted an interference for the French language as did "environment" and "parliament". The word "ineligible" evidenced the greatest variety of spellings, i.e., inelligible, iniligible, inelligable.

The distribution table on page 38 of the Preliminary Report, Grade 11 Franco-Manitoban Schools indicates that 49.2% of the students (200-201 combined) obtained 75% or more on their test with five percent of students spelling all words correctly or having only one error. Forty-one point five percent (41.5%) of the students scored between 50% - 75% and nine point three percent (9.3%) scored below 50%.

Summary

Results from the GIM indicate that when 200 and 201 are combined, 87.9% of the students score in the middle and high ranges for process writing; 90.4% of the students attain the same level of performance for essay writing. When results are taken separately, 91.7% and 94.1% of the 200 students obtained scores in the middle/high ranges for both tasks. The results are somewhat different for 201 students (64.2% - 64.3% for both tasks). However, the greatest differences in scores were evident in the high and low ranges; for the 201 students, as for the 200 students, there is a high percentage of students in the middle range where their writing is not identifiable as belonging to a specific group (200 or 201).

It was felt by the markers that, in general, Grade 11 Francophone students write well and have responded suitably to the tasks assigned. In several cases, the quality of writing was felt to be equivalent to Grade 12 standard.

Analytical Scales

The results of spelling and punctuation and capitalization are evidence that these areas represent strengths in the Grade 11 français students for both pieces of writing. For the 200 group, the differences in both tasks, where punctuation and capitals were concerned, were non-existent (94.5% and 94.1%). The 201 students did somewhat better in process writing than in essay writing (89.4% vs. 82.2% respectively). It was noted that the use of colons and semi-colons was poor and in many instances non-existent. Comma faults were also present, although not as common.

The students in the 200 group performed well in spelling with 90.9% and 89.4% of the students scoring in the middle/high range in each task. The 201 students scored slightly better on the process writing (75% in the middle/high as opposed to 71.5% in the essays). Some common errors noted were "recieve", "responsability", "alot". Other words such as "alcool", "specifique", "individuel", "essentiel" denoted an interference from the French language. In the spelling test, interferences were also noted in words such as "parlement", "environnement", "developpement". However, the distribution table given on page 38 of the Preliminary Report for Grade 11 Franco-Manitoban Schools indicates that for the combined group (200 & 201) 49.2% of the students obtained 75% or more on their test, with five percent (5%) of those being tested spelling all words correctly or having only one error. Forty-one point five percent (41.5%) scored between 50% and 75%, and 9.3% scored below 50%.

Focus and theme is an area which appeared as a strength in process writing for both groups (86.8% in the high/middle range for a combined score). The intensity of focus was not as evident with the essay (76.1% in high/middle). In many cases, the direction established in the introduction was forgotten during the development of the writing. Having set themselves up well in their first paragraph, many writers, by the middle of the essay, lost sight of their direction and strayed off the topic. The assigned task was to write an opinion essay in order to persuade the reader of the validity of the adopted viewpoint. Too often the writing became a narrative piece, where students, in describing personal experiences which took up too much of the essay, strayed from the purpose and spoiled structure. In some cases writers failed to establish the thesis or central idea through a lack of title for their essay.

Organization and Sequence

Although many samples showed competent organization in process writing, 18.9% of the papers (for 200/201 combined) evidenced poor paragraph writing skills on the part of the writer. Many students tended to write a series of one or two line paragraphs, with no concept of topic sentence, and an ineffective use or absence of transition phrases. However, it was felt by many raters that this may have been due to the vagueness of instructions given to the writers by the test, which did not specify whether the students were to write a paragraph or an essay.

In general, results for organization and sequence were better for process writing than for essay writing probably because this type of writing lends itself better to sequential organization.

Organization and sequence in essay writing denoted several weaknesses with 25.9% of students placing in the low range for the combined results. Many papers failed to introduce the central idea or thesis in a clear, effective opening paragraph that caught the interest of the reader and set the direction for the essay. Deficiencies were noted in topic sentences, paragraph division, and transition phrases. On the majority conclusions were very weak, generally little more than one-line paragraphs which left the reader confused about the importance of the arguments presented. Another weakness noted quite frequently was the absence of a line of logic being developed by the writers. Coherence may have been present in a cluster of two or three sentences, but this inter-connectedness did not extend from paragraph to paragraph or from one section of the paper to another.

Wording and Style

In process writing instructions to students asked for lively writing. It was found that, generally, samples were not lively, although some students did attempt to meet this criterion by being facetious in their writing. Perhaps, as noted by some markers, the nature of process writing makes it difficult to establish whether to credit direct, concise writing or more unusual creative pieces.

The results indicate that process writing was favored by 201 students who performed better on this task than on the task of essay writing (71.4% in the high/middle range for process writing versus 57.2% in the same ranges for essay writing). They generally had more control over this type of discourse.

In essay writing students, in some instances, had lots of ideas on the topic but not sufficient language skills to express them. Thoughts were expressed in awkward sentence forms, and words and phrases chosen seemed colourless, uninteresting or too general or ambiguous indicating a need to improve students' awareness of the need for precise syntax. Many writers had not internalized a sense of audience and their papers did not reveal a sensitivity to the reader.

Ideas

The 201 students performed considerably better in process writing (75% in high/middle range) than in essay writing (50% high/middle range). The 200 writers obtained relatively the same scores on both papers (81.0% and 84.7%). It was generally felt that the two writing tasks did not provide scope for students' creativity or originality. Process writing seemed to generate a greater variety of responses which appeared to be more interesting while several pieces contained humour thus bringing occasional comic relief. The essay topic produced surprisingly conventional content. Many students adopted an essentially egocentric point of view, preferring the safe route to risk-taking and presenting the acceptable or obvious in cliché form.

Choice of Details and Elaboration of Ideas

In the combined results for 200/201 students, more writers placed in the high/middle range in the characteristic for essay writing (79.7%) than for process writing (73.5%). For those papers in low ranges, content in both pieces tended to be too general. Little use was made of detail, images, or explanations and, as a result, the writings were dull and mediocre. Some inconsistency was noted. Although ideas and elaboration of these are closely related, certain students whose ideas rated a 2 out of a possible 6 developed these ideas with considerable thoroughness. While others with subtle and original ideas neglected to develop them into vivid, descriptive products.

Sentence Structure

The results on this item indicate that for the 200 group, nearly one out of five students (19.4%) place in the high range and are able to manipulate a variety of sentence structures and use them effectively in essay writing. The percentage is somewhat lower in process writing (12.5%). For the 201 group, more students (60.8%) place in the high/middle range for process writing than for essays (46.5%). It was noted that for those performing at the lower level, too many simple sentences were present with the compound/complex type appearing infrequently. Furthermore, run-on sentences or sentence fragments were common.

Usage

In this area of writing, nearly one out of four students in the 200 group placed in the low range (20.2% and 23.5%), while in the 201 group, the proportions are closer to 1 in 3 (32.1% - 39.3%). It was noted that even in some well-organized, focused pieces the following errors were present:

- lack of or misuse of articles (definite or indefinite)
- incorrect use of future, future perfect tense, past tenses
- faulty pronoun reference
- misuse of apostrophe in possessives
- misuse of prepositions
- incorrect use of idiomatic phrases
- lack of passive voice objectivity in writing through the use of "you"

Overview

To sum up, GIM results show that a satisfactory percentage of Grade 11 *français* students can write a paper, either in process writing or in essay writing, in which the quality of thought and effectiveness of overall organization and presentation is appropriate for Grade 11 or better.

For the 200 students, the analytical scale shows definite strengths in spelling, punctuation and capitalization despite some interferences from the first language. Focus and theme is also a strength for these students in process writing. The areas of organization and sequence, wording and style, focus and theme in essay writing, ideas, and sentence structure were judged to be satisfactory. Areas which need to be improved are those of details and elaboration of ideas and usage.

For the 201 students, results show that punctuation and capitalization and focus and theme are strengths in these students' writing. All other areas need to be improved.

All of the above areas will receive most benefit from classroom strategies such as brainstorming, mapping, discussion, sentence manipulation, which foster the development of ideas, organization and sentence structure.

Students need to develop an awareness of the aspects that cause interferences from their first language in the area of usage. They should be helped to consciously analyze and think about these elements in order to eliminate them.

CHAPTER 6

Teacher Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire was designed to obtain information regarding classroom practices utilized in writing instruction by Manitoba Language Arts teachers, the questionnaire being the same at all three levels: grades 4, 8, and 11. The analysis of the responses reported are for all grades combined. Further details, including tables indicating results by grade level, together with the questionnaire itself, are found in the Appendix.

Question 1: **The first item on the questionnaire required the teachers to indicate all grades and levels at which they teach Language Arts.**

Question 2: **This question addressed the issue of the kinds of pre-writing activities utilized in the classroom and the frequency of their use. The scale used to assess this frequency was:**

1 = never 2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month 4 = one or more times a week

In all grades (4 - 8 - 11) the most common pre-writing activities were: talking, brainstorming, listening, free writing.

Clustering/mapping, and listing although utilized in some classrooms were done much less frequently. Outlining was done more often in grade 11 than in the other grades.

Question 3: **What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own?**

In all grades (4 - 8 - 11) the strategies most often used by students were: jotting down notes, posing questions to be explored, outlining, categorizing. Drawing pictures and diagrams were most often observed in grades 4 and 8. Webbing was used 33.3% of the time in grade 4, while priorizing appeared most frequently in grades 8 and 11.

Question 4: **In order of frequency (1 = most frequent, etc.) please indicate how topics are generated for your students.**

In grade 4, topics were most frequently assigned by teachers or had to be chosen from a list of topics. Seldom were they created by the students in relation to a theme being studied.

In grades 8 and 11, it was a toss-up between topics assigned by the teacher and those chosen from a list of possible topics. In both grades, student-initiated topics occurred less frequently.

Question 5: **In order of frequency (1 = most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common purposes for which students write.**

Remarks made by the teachers indicate that for many this question was difficult to answer as they felt that some of these categories overlap. However, from the tables,

- to explain, to entertain, to inform, to describe were the most commonly identified purposes for grade 4,
- to explain, to persuade, to describe, to learn were the most commonly identified purposes for grade 8,
- to explain, to persuade, to inform, to interpret were identified as the most common purposes for grade 11.

Question 6: **In order of frequency (1 = most frequent, etc.) please indicate the most common sources of topics for students' writing.**

For grade 4, the student's personal experience was listed as the most common source of topics for writing, response to literature was second, and topics in other school subjects was third.

For grades 8 and 11, response to literature appeared most frequently, with students writing about personal experiences in second place.

Question 7: **How frequently do your students address the following audiences in their writing?**

In all grades (4 - 8 - 11) students write equally as often for their peers and their teachers, with their parents or the general public being addressed a few times a year. All students also write for themselves quite frequently or write for younger children.

Question 8: **How often does conferencing occur in your classroom?**

In grade 4, students conferencing with each other or with the teacher (from one to three times a month or one or more times a week) occurred approximately 65% of the time. Group student teacher conferencing happens 54.2% of the time.

In grade 8, students conferencing with each other (once a month or more) happened 57.2% of the time. Group student/teacher conferencing took place 58.0% of the time, whereas individual student/teacher conferencing occurred 50.0% of the time.

In grade 11, students conferencing with each other (one or more times a month) occurred 83.3% of the time. Group student/teacher conferencing happened 58.3% of the time and individual/teacher conferencing, 50.0% of the time.

Question 9: **How often do your students engage in the following: drafting, revising, editing, rewriting for publication, proofreading, sharing with each other?**

In grade 4, students engage in all of these activities in at least 70% of their writings (once a month or more often), except for rewriting for publication which is done in 46.9% of their writings.

In grade 8, students engage in all of these activities in at least 70% of their writings (once a month or more often), except for rewriting for publication which is done 35.7% of the time.

The same can be said of grade 11 students who engage in all these activitie in at least 66% of their writings with the exception of rewriting for publication which is engaged in 33.3% of the time.

Question 10: In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy?

This question yielded answers represented by two different percentages which made it difficult to adequately assess the results.

Question 11: How are students' final products shared with others?

It was evident from the answers supplied that much sharing of the students' final products goes on. From the tables for all grades (4, 8, 11), many of the writings are read or presented to the group, put on class or school bulletin boards, placed in school libraries, or published in school newspapers.

Other forms of sharing (from comments made by teachers) comprise group and divisional anthologies, Young Author's Conferences, Language Arts Festival, penpal letters sent to other schools.

Question 12: Do Language Arts teachers and other teachers ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum?

Answers from the tables show that for

grade 4	25.0% (YES)	75.0% (NO)
grade 8	14.3% (YES)	85.7% (NO)
grade 11	8.3% (YES)	91.7% (NO)

Question 13: Do your students use writing folders?

From the tables, results show that

grade 4	58.3% (YES)	41.7% (NO)
grade 8	42.9% (YES)	57.1% (NO)
grade 11	58.3% (YES)	41.7% (NO)

The numerous comments made in response to this question by teachers whose students use the writing folders indicate the usefulness of this instrument as an organizational and a motivational tool in the writing classroom. Many teachers acknowledged their usefulness in evaluating the students' progress in writing over time in a variety of writing assignments.

CHAPTER 7

Findings and Recommendations

The purpose of the 1988 Writing Assessment Program was to provide data and feedback about the quality of student writing and the instructional context in which writing was being taught. The results of the Assessment would also indicate the extent to which progress has been made generally in implementing the K-12 integrated English Language Arts program since its introduction into schools in 1982, and measure the specific contribution of the Writing Process model in advancing writing competence among students. The information obtained was to aid local and provincial curriculum development, assist in the professional development of teachers, and thereby enhance the education of students in the Province.

The concluding section of the General Report, therefore, contains in summary the findings and recommendations of the Writing Technical Advisory Committee based upon the Results of the Writing Test, the Comments of the Markers, and the responses of teachers to the Questionnaire.

The conclusions of the Committee and the recommendations which follow are directed to all educators and educational groups involved in the teaching and assessment of student writing.

The Writing Technical Advisory Committee took several innovative steps to improve the reliability of its testing program.

At each grade level, two pieces of writing in different modes were assigned on different days. In each assignment the writer's role, the audience, and purpose were clearly specified. Each piece of writing was rated by, at least two independent and carefully trained markers who were, also, experienced teachers at that grade level. Students were given the opportunity to submit their best rehearsed and researched performance under classroom conditions which allowed the re-writing of drafts.

It is generally accepted, however, that there are a number of constraints to reliable testing: for example, writers vary in their performance from time to time and according to the task assigned; carefully trained markers can disagree; the conditions under which students write can affect their performance.

The writing of students in the grades 4, 8, and 11 samples were assessed first on a General Impression Marking scale (GIM) of 1 to 12, and then scored on nine Analytic scales to measure more specifically their performance in the nine stylistic elements regarded as essential to school writing.

The GIM score measured the communicative effectiveness of the writing; its level of thought, the appropriateness of expression, and the writer's awareness of audience and purpose.

The nine Analytic scores provided additional feedback about the ability of students to choose and control the use of the following elements of writing: Organization and Sequence, Wording and Style, Focus or Theme, Ideas, Choice of Detail and Elaboration of Ideas, Sentence Structure, Usage, Punctuation and Capitalization, and Spelling.

General Impression Marking

On the basis of the General Impression Marking Scale (GIM) scores, it was found that:

(i) In the three grades tested, a fair percentage of students were judged capable of a high level of proficiency in writing. The distribution of students performing in the high range was:

Grade 4	
Story	8.0%
Report	19.2%

Grade 8	
Persuasive	22.5%
Narrative	25.0%

	Grade 11		
	200/201	200	201
Process	21.0%	23.8%	3.6%
Essay	20.8%	23.5%	3.6%

(ii) Most of the writing in the Provincial sample was within the middle range of expectation; that is, though the writing of these students exhibited weaknesses, it was considered to be functional for the particular grade level. The distribution of students performing in the middle range was:

Grade 4	
Story	80.7%
Report	70.9%

Grade 8	
Persuasive	57.5%
Narrative	62.8%

	Grade 11		
	200/201	200	201
Process	66.9%	67.9%	60.6%
Essay	69.6%	70.6%	60.7%

(iii) A number of students at each grade scored in the low range, indicative of a need for extensive instruction. The distribution of students performing in the low range was:

Grade 4	
Story	11.2%
Report	9.9%

Grade 8	
Persuasive	20.0%
Narrative	12.2%

	Grade 11		
	200/201	200	201
Process	12.2%	8.3%	35.7%
Essay	9.6%	5.9%	35.7%

A comparison of the mean scores, in brackets, in the different modes of writing assigned reveals the following:

- In grade 4, students performed somewhat better in Report Writing (6.82) than in Story Writing (6.32).
- In grade 8, students did better in Narrative Writing (6.99) than in Persuasive Writing (6.64).
- In grade 11 (combined 200/201), students scored better on the Essay (6.89) than on the Process Writing (6.75) assignment.
- In the Anglais 200 sample, a mean performance mark of (7.18) was recorded for Essay Writing while the Process Writing Assessment received a mean score of (7.13).
- The Anglais 201 sample registered a mean of (5.14) for the Essay and (5.29) for the Process Writing.

Analytic Marking

The nine Analytic scale scores for the essential features of school writing were marked holistically. This approach conforms with the notion that in the composing process these elements are interrelated. Their deployment in writing is a matter of choice made in terms of purpose, audience, and stance or point of view.

(i) In the three grades tested the best performances were registered in the area of mechanics: Spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization.

The lower scores registered in Usage were often caused by careless and inaccurate syntax: faulty subject/verb, sentence fragments, and, in grade 11, run-on sentences and poor pronoun reference. Some evidence of interference with the first language was noted in both spelling and usage.

(ii) The weakest scores in all grades were obtained in the areas of Content (Ideas) and Expression; namely, Ideas, Choice of Detail and Elaboration of Ideas, Theme or Focus, Organization and Sequence, Sentence Structure, and Wording and Style.

These areas involve the higher order of thinking and language skills such as the ability to generate, interpret, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate ideas and to present opinions in an orderly progression with a sense of purpose.

Recommendations

Many changes have taken place in the field of writing in the last few years and teachers have become more conscious of how children develop as writers. They are aware that in order to help their students in the writing strand of the language arts. they must become involved with the children in the writing process rather than simply in evaluating the product. They understand that writing is not a linear activity but one which contains "recursive, overlapping steps" (Calkins, 1986), and that it is through what is known as the "process of writing", namely rehearsal, drafting, revision, editing, that children learn to react with their writing and become better writers. They recognize that the frequency with which children write is the single most important factor in their development as writers, that the element of time is crucial if their students are to do their best, and that conferencing, both student/teacher and peer conferencing, allows the children to become risk-takers and to see themselves as authors. The questionnaire responses point to the fact that much sharing of students' texts and publication of these happen in the classroom and that writing folders or some other method of keeping track of students' writing (either in progress or in finished form) are being utilized by teachers.

The "process of writing" implies writing frequently with much risk-taking on the part of the students. It does not, however, imply lack of direction on the part of the teachers. In order to extend children's growth as writers, teachers need to become active partners in their students' writing, helping them to understand the functions and power of print through mini-lessons (Calkins). Mini-lessons are a time for teacher input with the purpose of adding to the students' information: without this input there would be no change in the children's writing.

These mini-lessons, involving the whole class or a group of students during short periods of time, could centre on different areas of difficulties such as focus, voice, point of view, or be used to develop already existing skills, e.g., vocabulary, style. Outlining, mapping, categorizing, priorizing of information in the pre-writing stage would address students' difficulties with organization and sequencing. Discussions, both in large and small groups, and brainstorming are some of the most useful pre-writing techniques for generating ideas. Greater use of these methods as well as the use of drama, drawing, and interviewing would enlarge the pool of students' ideas and give them help in the elaboration of these. Sentence structure could be improved through sentence combining and sentence manipulation activities. Mini-lessons are useful in clarifying the purpose and the audience for which the writing is being done. this exercise could lead to more meaningful writing situations in which students write texts reflecting a range of purposes and audiences.

This is also a time where difficulties with interferences in usage, punctuation, capitals, and spelling caused by the learning of a second language, are addressed. It is important to keep in mind that cognitive clarity about these areas will greatly diminish these difficulties, whereas, frequent writing with editing on the part of the students will be most beneficial to the mechanics of writing.

For those teachers needing more help with the implementing of these techniques and others to improve their students' writing, information can be found in the Language Arts Curricula, journals, and books about reading and writing (see bibliography).

Teachers want to take responsibility for their own professional development and are always searching for ways by which they can improve their teaching. It is fortunate that excellent workshops on the process of writing are being given and that many books on good writing exist.

1. In all grades the best performance scores were obtained in the mechanics of writing; Spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization.

   It is recommended that:

   ♦ **The strong Spelling and Punctuation program in schools be maintained and incorporated into pre- and post-writing activities in imaginative ways without imposing restraints on the students' expression of thoughts and feelings.**

   Where weak usage occurs, particularly in cases of interferance with the first language, instruction at the sentence level be given. This instruction should not be divorced from students' actual writing.

2. On the Analytic scales, weak scores were recorded for all grades in the important areas of Content and Expression; namely Ideas, Organization and Sequence, Choice of Detail and Elaboration, Theme or Focus, Sentence Structure, and Wording and Style.

These six components of the composing process involve such high order thinking and language skills as generating, interpreting, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating ideas and presenting them in orderly progression with a sense of purpose.

In each of these six elements, 15% or more of all students were functioning at the low level. The writing of these students was rated weak because of the poverty or superficiality of ideas. Students in this group who had original ideas often lacked the ability to organize and express their thoughts effectively.

The results show most students in the sample need instruction in procedures which would help them explore ideas sensitively and systematically in order to determine what they wish to say.

Replies to the questionnaire suggest that most teachers use only a limited range of pre-writing activities. The use of effective improvised classroom drama is significantly low.

A particular weakness in the writing at all grades was the inability of students to clarify and elaborate upon their ideas.

The markers in their comments refer to the lack of editing done between first and final drafts and the failure of students to use the post-writing stage to elaborate ideas and to link purpose, audience, and voice in their writing.

From the test results and markers' comments, it seems necessary that students be given more help at the post-writing stage in learning how to focus, sustain, and support their ideas, and to master strategies that would make their writing more vivid and better organized.

Specific help should be given in supporting assertions, qualifying generalizations by using modifiers, phrases, and clauses.

It is recommended that:

♦ **Provincial and local inservice agencies provide workshops and discussions for teachers to examine the writing process. These workshops should aim to help teachers remove many of the frustrations and difficulties many students feel about writing by:-**

(a) **promoting useful pre-writing activities which promote the generation and elaboration of ideas, including the use of classroom drama, discussion, brainstorming, and role-playing;**

(b) **assisting teachers to apply and adapt small group instruction to local conditions;**

(c) viewing and discussing tapes of good classroom practices, particularly the viewing of tapes dealing with initiating student writing;

(d) helping teachers to formulate topics for student writing and expand the uses and amounts of writing done in school; and

(e) exploring more fully the relationship between expressive (personal) writing and transactional (informational) writing.

Teachers

(a) strive to develop their own facility in writing;

(b) attend local and provincial workshops to examine and study the curriculum as it applies to the writing process in general, and to the particularities of the the learning situation in a second-lange setting;

(c) use language arts for teaching writing skills required in different subject areas and use the content of other subjects to teach language arts;

(d) be aware that development in writing is based on the requirements of the individual student's writing which allows the marker to maintain a focus on the central meaning of the written product while observing the way the parts relate to one another;

(e) include in their methodology such strategies as conferencing, peer-tutoring, drama, puppetry and interviews, and the use of writing folders. All of these are essential to the teaching and evaluation of spoken and written language.

(f) become cognizant of the holistic approach of evaluating students' writing which allows the marker to maintain a focus on the central meaning of the written product while observing the way the parts relate to one another.

3. Responses to the Questionnaire indicate an interest in evaluation generally and a growing use of peer evaluation and anthologies (folders) of written products as well as an improved attitude among teachers to provincial testing since 1982.

The interest of teachers in holistic methods of marking stems from the need for accurate and efficient methods of monitoring writing growth.

Large class sizes, mounting parental and public interest, and an anticipated increase in the amount of writing expected to be marked, demand that the methods of monitoring be visible, reliable, progressive in nature and economical in the use of the teachers' time.

It is recommended that:

- **The Department of Education and Training continue to initiate and run inservices and workshops on evaluation of writing so that teachers throughout the Province are exposed to successful approaches and criteria for evaluation. These approaches should include ways of commenting positively on writing that would generally help the student.**

4. Teachers from kindergarten to beyond high school face a challenge to develop writing competence in students through learning strategies and environments to learning which while emphasizing a process approach to learning, recognizes the importance of knowledge.

In an age of technology there is a need to access and communicate large amounts of information. The ability to write remains a basic prerequisite to success in our society.

This challenge to serve youth and society under the fluid conditions that prevail today demands the collective effort of all educators.

It is recommended that:

- **The Department of Education and Training undertake the reorganization of the Manitoba Writing Project in conjunction with the universities, community colleges, faculties of education, Manitoba Teachers' Society, and the Manitoba Association of School Trustees.**

The purpose of this Project would be:

(i) to promote interest in the teaching of writing at all levels.

(ii) to provide summer workshops, courses with university accreditation for teachers.

(iii) to develop a pool or cadre of teachers of writing available for local inservice education.

(iv) to act as a clearing house for ideas, strategies, research and study in writing, and to maintain contact with similar organizations throughout the world.

(v) to promote interest in student writing.

(vi) to make and circulate tapes of good writing practices.

5. Given the growing knowledge and interest on how children develop as writers and given that this Writing Assessment was designed to reflect what is now considered essential in the teaching and evaluation of writing, the Technical Advisory Committee recommended that the divisional inservice agencies provide instructional leadership and support professional development in all areas of the writing process.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **School Divisions both encourage and provide teachers with the opportunity, through workshops and discussions, to:**

(a) examine the writing process for themselves;

(b) examine and study the curriculum as it applies to the writing process and to initiate inquiry into the kinds of writing students need in different contexts; and

(c) **develop an awareness of the holistic method of evaluating the written products of their students and acquire the skills to practice it in their classroom.**

6. Given the importance of language and writing across levels and content areas to one's learning, universities and other post-secondary institutions are urged to provide increased opportunities for teachers in training to develop their skills in the teaching of language and writing.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **Teachers in training at the undergraduate level:**

(a) **be required to take courses that provide them with a good understanding of the current philosophy concerning the writing process;**

(b) **be taught, through very practical methods, how to evaluate their students' writing, in line with what is now considered essential in writing;**

(c) **have access to writing centres (already in existence in some universities). These centres allow participants to apply to their own assignments the principles of the process of writing and, thereby, gain an understanding of this concept and of the strategies involved. This practical training would have a positive spin-off on their teaching of writing in the classroom.**

7. The Department of Education and Training is to be commended for the type of testing instrument developed for the Writing Assessment of 1988. The purpose of this test was to ensure that the goals and objectives of the writing strand of the Manitoba Language Arts Curriculum were accurately and comprehensively reflected.

The testing committee, aware of the needs of children as writers, attempted to create a testing situation that replicated as closely as possible the classroom procedures used by teachers following the writing process. Provisions were made for:

1. the writing for different purposes:
   Grade 4 - story writing and report writing
   Grade 8 - persuasive writing and narrative writing
   Grade 11 - process writing and essay writing

2. a time format that allowed for writing to take place over a period of several days (3 or 4), and which included group discussions, revising, editing, proofreading, and recopying of final copies.

Teachers on the Technical Advisory Committee thought that the time dimension was crucial. They felt that if enough time were given for the test, allowing it to parallel the actual writing process in the classroom, then the writing assessment could be viewed by all participants (teachers and students alike) as an authentic activity in communication occurring in the classroom, with everyone participating. It would remove the burden of being the "unlucky" few, randomly chosen to write a test. It seems important that the assessment be accepted as a useful teaching tool in classroom communication given in the context of process writing.

According to the members of the Technical Advisory Committee, this procedure did produce positive results; some further refinement, however, is still required.

It is, therefore, recommended that:

- **The Department of Education and Training consider the following with an aim to improving future tests:**

  (a) increasing the time span for writing the test (to a two weeks' period, if need be), in order to further approximate the writing process as it happens in the classroom. This time span would allow:

  - **for a sharing of the students' texts with their peers. This would legitimize instructions given in the test to establish the audience, i.e., "Write your story with your classmates as intended audience".**

  - **for a more thorough research of a subject for report writing (in grade 4). The test instructions suggested that one hour be allowed to do relevant research at school and that encouragement be given for further research at home. It was noted that library facilities were overtaxed when two or three classes were doing research at the same time, and that many children do not have resource materials for research at home. A longer time in which to do this research would alleviate this problem.**

  (b) providing clearer instructions regarding the use of dictionaries, thesaurus, language aids (for checking surface features) and "slim-jims", notes (for doing research) when writing the test. These are valid, recommended tools when writing in the classroom, and committee members felt their use should be permitted when doing the writing assessment. The stated purpose of the test was to "find out how well students are using some important skills in writing" and not "how well they can remember (memory test)".

  (c) re-examining the categores used for the analytic marking. It is suggested that one category, mechanics, could include spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage. Also, the criteria for style, which might include sentence structure, deserves to be elaborated.

  (d) providing for only a code number to appear on the writing booklets, eliminating any possible bias effect caused by the presence of names, or levels (i.e., 200-201, as in the case of grade 11).

(e) taking steps to increase student motivation in writing the test. Performance on the provincial assessment has no influence on report card marks or school grades. Teachers on the Technical Advisory Committee felt that for this reason, some students, especially at the upper levels, may fail to put forward sincere, positive efforts. It was also noted that because of the semester system, some schools having no instruction in English at that time, did not participate in the Assessment. Other schools chose to have the students picked as random samples removed from the classroom to write, while the rest of the students carried on their regular work. The Committee suggested that if, in the future years, provisions were made by the divisions to obtain total class group participation in a writing assignment that meets the conditions of an authentic writing situation, the random samples forwarded to Manitoba Education would be a real test of what happens in a writing classroom in the province.

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APPENDIX

TEACHER SURVEY

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE GRADE 4 FRANCAIS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information regarding classroom practices in writing instruction. The data collected will be used to help interpret the results of the student testing.

1. Indicate below **all** grades and levels at which you teach English language arts (**check all that apply**):

0.0% grade 1
4.2% grade 2
20.8% grade 3
100.0% grade 4
8.3% grade 5

4.2% grade 6
0.0% grade 7
0.0% grade 8
0.0% grade 9
0.0% English/anglais 100

0.0% English/anglais 101
0.0% English/anglais 200
0.0% English/anglais 201
0.0% English/anglais 300
0.0% English/anglais 301

NOTE: Please be sure to answer all subsequent questions in terms of your grade/level Grade 4 Anglais program. (Sample size = 24)

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which you use any of the following pre-writing activities:

1 = never
2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Talking	0.0%	16.7%	20.8%	62.5%	0.0%
b. Interviewing	16.7%	54.2%	29.2%	0.0%	0.0%
c. Brainstorming	0.0%	16.7%	54.2%	25.0%	4.2%
d. Drama	20.8%	70.8%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
e. Viewing	16.7%	41.7%	29.2%	8.3%	4.2%
f. Listening	4.2%	16.7%	37.5%	41.7%	0.0%
g. Sensory Activities	12.5%	41.7%	25.0%	8.3%	12.5%
h. Mental Exercises (Imaging).	12.5%	45.8%	29.2%	8.3%	4.2%
i. Free Writing	4.2%	12.5%	33.3%	41.7%	8.3%
j. Writing Leads	4.2%	33.3%	37.5%	16.7%	8.3%
k. Drawing	4.2%	29.2%	37.5%	25.0%	4.2%
l. Outlining	12.5%	29.2%	41.7%	12.5%	4.2%
m. Clustering/Mapping	33.3%	25.0%	20.8%	4.2%	16.7%
n. Listing	12.5%	45.8%	37.5%	4.2%	0.0%

3. What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own? (**check all that apply**)

54.2% posing questions to be explored
58.3% drawing pictures/diagrams
79.2% jotting notes (words, phrases, ideas)
8.3% priorizing
54.2% outlining
33.3% webbing
12.5% categorizing
4.2% mapping
20.8% rehearsing
0.0% other (please specify):______________________

4. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, 2= second most frequent, etc.) please indicate how writing topics are generated for your students.

	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	NR
assigned by teacher	58.3%	20.8%	4.2%	0.0%	16.7%
students choose from a list of possible topics	20.8%	45.8%	25.0%	0.0%	8.3%
created by student	12.5%	25.0%	33.3%	4.2%	25.0%
other (please specify)	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	95.8%

5. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common **purposes** for which your students write:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
to explain	8.3%	12.5%	16.7%	4.2%	12.5%	45.8%
to persuade	0.0	0.0	4.2	4.2	0.0	91.7
to entertain	54.2	8.3	4.2	8.3	8.3	16.7
to inform	8.3	16.7	16.7	8.3	0.0	50.0
to describe	4.2	41.7	25.0	4.2	4.2	20.8
to debate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to interpret	4.2	0.0	4.2	8.3	4.2	79.2
other (please specify)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to instruct	0.0	4.2	0.0	4.2	4.2	87.5
to play with language	0.0	0.0	4.2	8.3	20.8	66.7
to explore	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	91.7
to discover	0.0	4.2	4.2	8.3	4.2	79.2
to clarify	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	8.3	83.3
to organize	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	4.2	91.7
to learn	8.3	0.0	4.2	4.2	4.2	79.2

6. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) indicate the most common **sources** of topics for your students' writing:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
audio visual material	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	16.7%	29.2%	41.7%
exposure to community (field trips, etc.)	4.2	8.3	20.8	25.0	20.8	20.8
topics in other school subjects	12.5	16.7	37.5	12.5	4.2	16.7
in response to literature	20.8	37.5	12.5	12.5	4.2	12.5
students' personal experience	58.3	29.2	4.2	0.0	0.0	8.3

7. How frequently do your students address the following **audiences** in their writing?
1 = never 2 = a few times a year 3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Self.	4.2%	29.2%	16.7%	41.7%	8.3%
b. Peers	0.0%	29.2%	37.5%	33.3%	0.0%
c. Teacher (as trusted adult).	4.2%	33.3%	29.2%	33.3%	0.0%
d. Parents	16.7%	54.2%	16.7%	4.2%	8.3%
e. Public.	29.2%	41.7%	16.7%	4.2%	8.3%
f. Other (please specify). . .	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

8. How frequently do the following occur in your classroom **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. individual student-teacher conferences	4.2%	29.2%	45.8%	20.8%	0.0%
b. group student-teacher conferences	12.5%	33.3%	37.5%	16.7%	0.0%
c. students conferencing with each other.	8.3%	20.8%	45.8%	25.0%	0.0%

9. How frequently do your students engage in the following **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Drafting.	4.2%	20.8%	37.5%	33.3%	4.2%
b. Revising.	4.2%	16.7%	45.8%	29.2%	4.2%
c. Editing	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	20.8%	4.2%
d. Rewriting for publication .	8.3%	45.8%	41.7%	4.2%	0.0%
e. Proofreading.	4.2%	16.7%	50.0%	29.2%	0.0%
f. Sharing with others	0.0%	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%	0.0%

10. In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy? **Please circle the closest number.**

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	NR
0.0%	8.3%	4.2%	4.2%	0.0%	25.0%	4.2%	4.2%	16.7%	4.2%	20.8%	8.3%

11. **How** are students' final products shared with others? (**Check all those that occur at least several times a year**):

87.5% put on class bulletin board

70.8% put on school (e.g., library) bulletin board

29.2% placed in school library

12.5% published in school newspaper

4.2% published in community newspaper

95.8% read or presented to a group

8.3% other (please specify)

12. Do language arts teachers and other subject teachers in your school ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum? 25.0% YES 75.0% NO

If yes, how frequently do you meet? **Check one.**

20.8% once or twice a year

4.2% 3 - 5 times a year

0.0% 6 or more times a year.

75.0% NR

13. Do your students use Writing Folders? 58.3% YES 41.7% NO
If yes, briefly describe how the use of the folder reflects the phases of the writing process itself.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE GRADE 8 FRANCAIS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information regarding classroom practices in writing instruction. The data collected will be used to help interpret the results of the student testing.

1. Indicate below **all** grades and levels at which you teach English language arts (**check all that apply**):

0.0% grade 1
0.0% grade 2
0.0% grade 3
0.0% grade 4
0.0% grade 5
0.0% grade 6
50.0% grade 7
92.9% grade 8
50.0% grade 9
7.1% English/anglais 100
7.1% English/anglais 101
0.0% English/anglais 200
0.0% English/anglais 201
7.1% English/anglais 300
0.0% English/anglais 301

> **NOTE: Please be sure to answer all subsequent questions in terms of your grade/level Grade 8 Français program.** (Sample size = 14)

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which you use any of the following pre-writing activities:

1 = never 2 = a few times a year 3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	Talking	0.0%	7.1%	50.0%	42.9%	0.0%
b.	Interviewing	42.9%	42.9%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
c.	Brainstorming	0.0%	35.7%	28.6%	35.7%	0.0%
d.	Drama	35.7%	57.1%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
e.	Viewing	21.4%	64.3%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
f.	Listening	0.0%	14.3%	42.9%	35.7%	7.1%
g.	Sensory Activities	28.6%	50.0%	21.4%	0.0%	0.0%
h.	Mental Exercises (Imaging)	14.3%	64.3%	7.1%	14.3%	0.0%
i.	Free Writing	7.1%	28.6%	50.0%	14.3%	0.0%
j.	Writing Leads	14.3%	42.9%	35.7%	7.1%	0.0%
k.	Drawing	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%
l.	Outlining	0.0%	35.7%	50.0%	14.3%	0.0%
m.	Clustering/Mapping	42.9%	28.6%	21.4%	0.0%	7.1%
n.	Listing	14.3%	50.0%	28.6%	7.1%	0.0%

3. What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own? (**check all that apply**)

85.7% posing questions to be explored

57.1% drawing pictures/diagrams

85.7% jotting notes (words, phrases, ideas)

50.0% priorizing

71.4% outlining

7.1% webbing

35.7% categorizing

0.0% mapping

28.6% rehearsing

14.3% other (please specify):

4. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, 2= second most frequent, etc.) please indicate how writing topics are generated for your students.

	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	NR
assigned by teacher	57.1%	7.1%	21.4%	0.0%	14.3%
students choose from a list of possible topics	21.4%	28.6%	21.4%	0.0%	28.6%
created by student	7.1%	50.0%	28.6%	0.0%	14.3%
other (please specify)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%

5. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common **purposes** for which your students write:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
to explain	28.6%	7.1%	7.1%	28.6%	0.0%	28.6%
to persuade	0.0	21.4	0.0	0.0	21.4	57.1
to entertain	7.1	0.0	21.4	7.1	0.0	64.3
to inform	0.0	14.3	28.6	0.0	7.1	50.0
to describe	7.1	14.3	14.3	7.1	7.1	50.0
to debate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	85.7
to interpret	7.1	0.0	0.0	7.1	7.1	78.6
other (please specify)	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	85.7
to instruct	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to play with language	7.1	14.3	0.0	7.1	0.0	71.4
to explore	0.0	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	71.4
to discover	0.0	7.1	0.0	7.1	0.0	85.7
to clarify	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	92.9
to organize	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0	92.9
to learn	21.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	64.3

6. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) indicate the most common **sources** of topics for your students' writing:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
audio visual material	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	28.6%	35.7%	21.4%
exposure to community (field trips, etc.)	0.0	7.1	14.3	21.4	42.9	14.3
topics in other school subjects	14.3	0.0	42.9	28.6	0.0	14.3
in response to literature	42.9	42.9	7.1	0.0	0.0	7.1
students' personal experience	35.7	42.9	7.1	0.0	0.0	14.3

7. How frequently do your students address the following **audiences** in their writing?

1 = never
2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Self.	7.1%	28.6%	35.7%	21.4%	7.1%
b. Peers	0.0%	21.4%	57.1%	14.3%	7.1%
c. Teacher (as trusted adult).	0.0%	7.1%	85.7%	0.0%	7.1%
d. Parents	28.6%	42.9%	14.3%	0.0%	14.3%
e. Public.	7.1%	64.3%	21.4%	0.0%	7.1%
f. Other (please specify).	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	7.1%	85.7%

8. How frequently do the following occur in your classroom **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. individual student-teacher conferences	0.0%	42.9%	42.9%	7.1%	7.1%
b. group student-teacher conferences	7.1%	35.7%	42.9%	7.1%	7.1%
c. students conferencing with each other.	0.0%	35.7%	28.6%	28.6%	7.1%

9. How frequently do your students engage in the following (**use the scale from question 7**)?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Drafting.	0.0%	7.1%	64.3%	21.4%	7.1%
b. Revising.	0.0%	14.3%	57.1%	21.4%	7.1%
c. Editing	0.0%	14.3%	50.0%	28.6%	7.1%
d. Rewriting for publication	0.0%	57.1%	28.6%	7.1%	7.1%
e. Proofreading.	0.0%	14.3%	50.0%	28.6%	7.1%
f. Sharing with others	0.0%	21.4%	42.9%	28.6%	7.1%

10. In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy? **Please circle the closest number.**

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	NR
0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	7.1%	0.0%	21.4%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%

11. **How** are students' final products shared with others? (**Check all those that occur at least several times a year**):

100.0% put on class bulletin board

42.9% put on school (e.g., library) bulletin board

21.4% placed in school library

7.1% published in school newspaper

100.0% published in community newspaper

100.0% read or presented to a group

7.1% other (please specify)____

____

12. Do language arts teachers and other subject teachers in your school ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum? 14.3% YES 85.7% NO

If yes, how frequently do you meet? **Check one.**

14.3% once or twice a year

0.0% 3 - 5 times a year

0.0% 6 or more times a year.

85.7% NR

13. Do your students use Writing Folders? 42.9% YES 57.1% NO

If yes, briefly describe how the use of the folder reflects the phases of the writing process itself.

____

____

____

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE ANGLAIS 200 & 201 COMBINED

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information regarding classroom practices in writing instruction. The data collected will be used to help interpret the results of the student testing.

1. Indicate below **all** grades and levels at which you teach English language arts (**check all that apply**):

0.0%	grade 1	0.0%	grade 6	41.7%	English/anglais 101
0.0%	grade 2	0.0%	grade 7	75.0%	English/anglais 200
0.0%	grade 3	16.7%	grade 8	50.0%	English/anglais 201
0.0%	grade 4	33.3%	grade 9	66.7%	English/anglais 300
0.0%	grade 5	41.7%	English/anglais 100	41.7%	English/anglais 301

NOTE: Please be sure to answer all subsequent questions in terms of your grade/level Anglais 200 & 201 Combined program. Sample size = 12

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which you use any of the following pre-writing activities:

1 = never 2 = a few times a year 3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	Talking	0.0%	16.7%	16.7%	66.7%	0.0%
b.	Interviewing	25.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%
c.	Brainstorming	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	16.7%	8.3%
d.	Drama	16.7%	50.0%	25.0%	8.3%	0.0%
e.	Viewing	8.3%	33.3%	41.7%	8.3%	8.3%
f.	Listening	16.7%	8.3%	41.7%	33.3%	0.0%
g.	Sensory Activities	41.7%	33.3%	16.7%	0.0%	8.3%
h.	Mental Exercises (Imaging)	25.0%	33.3%	25.0%	8.3%	8.3%
i.	Free Writing	0.0%	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	0.0%
j.	Writing Leads	0.0%	25.0%	66.7%	0.0%	8.3%
k.	Drawing	58.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%
l.	Outlining	8.3%	16.7%	66.7%	8.3%	0.0%
m.	Clustering/Mapping	41.7%	33.3%	8.3%	0.0%	16.7%
n.	Listing	8.3%	41.7%	33.3%	16.7%	0.0%

3. What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own? (**check all that apply**)

75.0% posing questions to be explored

8.3% drawing pictures/diagrams

83.3% jotting notes (words, phrases, ideas)

41.7% priorizing

75.0% outlining

16.7% webbing

50.0% categorizing

0.0% mapping

16.7% rehearsing

0.0% other (please specify):

4. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, 2= second most frequent, etc.) please indicate how writing topics are generated for your students.

	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	NR
assigned by teacher	41.7%	16.7%	25.0%	0.0%	16.7%
students choose from a list of possible topics	41.7%	16.7%	16.7%	0.0%	25.0%
created by student	0.0%	41.7%	33.3%	0.0%	25.0%
other (please specify)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

5. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common **purposes** for which your students write:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
to explain	16.7%	25.0%	8.3%	16.7%	0.0%	33.3%
to persuade	16.7	25.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	50.0
to entertain	0.0	0.0	25.0	25.0	8.3	41.7
to inform	8.3	8.3	8.3	0.0	0.0	75.0
to describe	8.3	0.0	16.7	16.7	25.0	33.3
to debate	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	91.7
to interpret	16.7	8.3	0.0	7.1	8.3	66.7
other (please specify)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to instruct	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	91.7
to play with language	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	91.7
to explore	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	83.3
to discover	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to clarify	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	91.7
to organize	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	83.3
to learn	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	91.7

6. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) indicate the most common **sources** of topics for your students' writing:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
audio visual material	0.0%	8.3%	33.3%	25.0%	8.3%	25.0%
exposure to community (field trips, etc.)	0.0	0.0	16.7	16.7	25.0	41.7
topics in other school subjects	0.0	0.0	25.0	16.7	8.3	50.0
in response to literature	58.3	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7
students' personal experience	25.0	50.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	16.7

7. How frequently do your students address the following **audiences** in their writing?

1 = never
2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Self.	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	16.7%	8.3%
b. Peers	0.0%	41.7%	25.0%	25.0%	8.3%
c. Teacher (as trusted adult).	8.3%	8.3%	58.3%	16.7%	8.3%
d. Parents	33.3%	58.3%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%
e. Public.	16.7%	58.3%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%
f. Other (please specify). . .	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	91.7%

8. How frequently do the following occur in your classroom **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. individual student-teacher conferences	0.0%	41.7%	16.7%	33.3%	8.3%
b. group student-teacher conferences	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	25.0%	8.3%
c. students conferencing with each other.	0.0%	8.3%	58.3%	25.0%	8.3%

9. How frequently do your students engage in the following (**use the scale from question 7**)?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Drafting.	0.0%	8.3%	66.7%	16.7%	8.3%
b. Revising.	0.0%	8.3%	58.3%	25.0%	8.3%
c. Editing	0.0%	16.7%	50.0%	25.0%	8.3%
d. Rewriting for publication .	33.3%	16.7%	25.0%	8.3%	16.7%
e. Proofreading.	8.3%	8.3%	50.0%	25.0%	8.3%
f. Sharing with others	0.0%	25.0%	41.7%	25.0%	8.3%

10. In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy? **Please circle the closest number.**

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	NR
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	16.7%	8.3%	16.7%

11. **How** are students' final products shared with others? (**Check all those that occur at least several times a year**):

58.3% put on class bulletin board
16.7% put on school (e.g., library) bulletin board
8.3% placed in school library
25.0% published in school newspaper
8.3% published in community newspaper
100.0% read or presented to a group
8.3% other (please specify)

12. Do language arts teachers and other subject teachers in your school ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum? 8.3% YES 91.7% NO

If yes, how frequently do you meet? **Check one.**

8.3% once or twice a year
0.0% 3 - 5 times a year
0.0% 6 or more times a year.
91.7% NR

13. Do your students use Writing Folders? 58.3% YES 41.7% NO

If yes, briefly describe how the use of the folder reflects the phases of the writing process itself.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE ANGLAIS 200

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information regarding classroom practices in writing instruction. The data collected will be used to help interpret the results of the student testing.

1. Indicate below **all** grades and levels at which you teach English language arts (**check all that apply**):

0.0% grade 1
0.0% grade 2
0.0% grade 3
0.0% grade 4
0.0% grade 5

0.0% grade 6
0.0% grade 7
12.5% grade 8
37.5% grade 9
50.0% English/anglais 100

37.5% English/anglais 101
87.5% English/anglais 200
25.0% English/anglais 201
75.0% English/anglais 300
25.0% English/anglais 301

NOTE: Please be sure to answer all subsequent questions in terms of your grade/level Anglais 200 program. (Sample size = 8)

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which you use any of the following pre-writing activities:

1 = never 2 = a few times a year 3 = one to three times a month 4 = one or more times a week

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	Talking	0.0%	25.0%	12.5%	62.5%	0.0%
b.	Interviewing	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
c.	Brainstorming	0.0%	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	0.0%
d.	Drama	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%
e.	Viewing	12.5%	25.0%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%
f.	Listening	25.0%	0.0%	37.5%	37.5%	0.0%
g.	Sensory Activities	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
h.	Mental Exercises (Imaging).	25.0%	37.5%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%
i.	Free Writing	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%
j.	Writing Leads	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%
k.	Drawing	62.5%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
l.	Outlining	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%
m.	Clustering/Mapping	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
n.	Listing	12.5%	62.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%

3. What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own? **(check all that apply)**

87.5%	posing questions to be explored
12.5%	drawing pictures/diagrams
87.5%	jotting notes (words, phrases, ideas)
37.5%	priorizing
75.0%	outlining
12.5%	webbing
37.5%	categorizing
0.0%	mapping
12.5%	rehearsing
0.0%	other (please specify):___

4. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, 2= second most frequent, etc.) please indicate how writing topics are generated for your students.

	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	NR
assigned by teacher	50.0%	0.0%	37.5%	0.0%	12.5%
students choose from a list of possible topics	37.5%	12.5%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
created by student	0.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0.0%	25.0%
other (please specify)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

5. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common **purposes** for which your students write:

	Frequency 1	2	3	4	5	NR
to explain	12.5%	25.0%	12.5%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
to persuade	25.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	62.5
to entertain	0.0	0.0	37.5	25.0	0.0	37.5
to inform	12.5	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	62.5
to describe	0.0	0.0	12.5	12.5	37.5	37.5
to debate	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.5
to interpret	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0
other (please specify)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to instruct	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	87.5
to play with language	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to explore	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to discover	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to clarify	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	87.5
to organize	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	75.0
to learn	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	87.5

6. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) indicate the most common **sources** of topics for your students' writing:

	Frequency 1	2	3	4	5	NR
audio visual material	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	25.0%
exposure to community (field trips, etc.)	0.0	0.0	25.0	12.5	37.5	25.0
topics in other school subjects	0.0	0.0	37.5	12.5	12.5	37.5
in response to literature	50.0	37.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5
students' personal experience	37.5	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5

7. How frequently do your students address the following **audiences** in their writing?

1 = never
2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Self.	0.0%	62.5%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%
b. Peers	0.0%	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	0.0%
c. Teacher (as trusted adult).	12.5%	0.0%	62.5%	25.0%	0.0%
d. Parents	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
e. Public.	12.5%	62.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%
f. Other (please specify). . .	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	87.5%

8. How frequently do the following occur in your classroom **(use the scale from question 7)**?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. individual student-teacher conferences	0.0%	50.0%	12.5%	37.5%	0.0%
b. group student-teacher conferences	0.0%	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	0.0%
c. students conferencing with each other.	0.0%	12.5%	62.5%	25.0%	0.0%

9. How frequently do your students engage in the following (**use the scale from question 7**)?

	1	2	3	4	N/R
a. Drafting.	0.0%	12.5%	62.5%	25.0%	0.0%
b. Revising.	0.0%	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	0.0%
c. Editing	0.0%	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	0.0%
d. Rewriting for publication .	37.5%	25.0%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%
e. Proofreading.	12.5%	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	0.0%
f. Sharing with others	0.0%	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	0.0%

10. In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy? **Please circle the closest number.**

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	NR
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	12.5%	12.5%

11. **How** are students' final products shared with others? (**Check all those that occur at least several times a year**):

62.5% put on class bulletin board

25.0% put on school (e.g., library) bulletin board

12.5% placed in school library

37.5% published in school newspaper

12.5% published in community newspaper

100.0% read or presented to a group

12.5% other (please specify)

12. Do language arts teachers and other subject teachers in your school ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum? 0.0% YES 100.0% NO

If yes, how frequently do you meet? **Check one.**

0.0% once or twice a year

0.0% 3 - 5 times a year

0.0% 6 or more times a year.

100.0% NR

13. Do your students use Writing Folders? 50.0% YES 50.0% NO

If yes, briefly describe how the use of the folder reflects the phases of the writing process itself.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING ASSESSMENT 1988

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE ANGLAIS 201

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information regarding classroom practices in writing instruction. The data collected will be used to help interpret the results of the student testing.

1. Indicate below **all** grades and levels at which you teach English language arts (**check all that apply**):

0.0% grade 1
0.0% grade 2
0.0% grade 3
0.0% grade 4
0.0% grade 5

0.0% grade 6
0.0% grade 7
25.0% grade 8
25.0% grade 9
25.0% English/anglais 100

50.0% English/anglais 101
50.0% English/anglais 200
100.0% English/anglais 201
50.0% English/anglais 300
75.0% English/anglais 301

NOTE: Please be sure to answer all subsequent questions in terms of your grade/level Anglais 201 program. (Sample size = 4)

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate the frequency with which you use any of the following pre-writing activities:

1 = never 2 = a few times a year 3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	Talking	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%
b.	Interviewing	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
c.	Brainstorming	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%
d.	Drama	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
e.	Viewing	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
f.	Listening	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%
g.	Sensory Activities	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
h.	Mental Exercises (Imaging)	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
i.	Free Writing	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%
j.	Writing Leads	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	25.0%
k.	Drawing	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
l.	Outlining	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%
m.	Clustering/Mapping	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
n.	Listing	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%

3. What pre-writing strategies do you typically observe your students using on their own? (**check all that apply**)

50.0% posing questions to be explored
0.0% drawing pictures/diagrams
75.0% jotting notes (words, phrases, ideas)
50.0% priorizing
75.0% outlining
25.0% webbing
75.0% categorizing
0.0% mapping
25.0% rehearsing
0.0% other (please specify):

4. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, 2= second most frequent, etc.) please indicate how writing topics are generated for your students.

	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	NR
assigned by teacher	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
students choose from a list of possible topics	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
created by student	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%
other (please specify)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

5. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) please indicate the five most common **purposes** for which your students write:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
to explain	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
to persuade	0.0	50.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	25.0
to entertain	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	25.0	50.0
to inform	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to describe	25.0	0.0	25.0	25.0	0.0	25.0
to debate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to interpret	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	50.0
other (please specify)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to instruct	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to play with language	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	75.0
to explore	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
to discover	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to clarify	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to organize	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
to learn	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

6. In order of frequency (1= most frequent, etc.) indicate the most common **sources** of topics for your students' writing:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR
audio visual material	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
exposure to community (field trips, etc.)	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	75.0
topics in other school subjects	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	75.0
in response to literature	75.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0
students' personal experience	0.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	25.0

7. How frequently do your students address the following **audiences** in their writing?

1 = never
2 = a few times a year
3 = one to three times a month
4 = one or more times a week

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	Self	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%
b.	Peers	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%
c.	Teacher (as trusted adult)	12.5%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	25.0%
d.	Parents	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
e.	Public	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
f.	Other (please specify)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

8. How frequently do the following occur in your classroom **(use the scale from question 7)**?

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	individual student-teacher conferences	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
b.	group student-teacher conferences	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
c.	students conferencing with each other	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%

9. How frequently do your students engage in the following (**use the scale from question 7**)?

		1	2	3	4	N/R
a.	Drafting	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%
b.	Revising	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%
c.	Editing	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%
d.	Rewriting for publication	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	50.0%
e.	Proofreading	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%
f.	Sharing with others	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%

10. In what proportion of writing assignments do students prepare one or more drafts in addition to the final copy? **Please circle the closest number.**

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	NR
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%

11. How are students' final products shared with others? (**Check all those that occur at least several times a year**):

50.0%	put on class bulletin board
0.0%	put on school (e.g., library) bulletin board
0.0%	placed in school library
0.0%	published in school newspaper
0.0%	published in community newspaper
100.0%	read or presented to a group
0.0%	other (please specify)________________

12. Do language arts teachers and other subject teachers in your school ever meet to plan writing across the curriculum? 25.0% YES 75.0% NO

If yes, how frequently do you meet? **Check one.**

25.0%	once or twice a year
0.0%	3 - 5 times a year
0.0%	6 or more times a year.
75.0%	NR

13. Do your students use Writing Folders? 75.0% YES 25.0% NO

If yes, briefly describe how the use of the folder reflects the phases of the writing process itself.